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THE GOOD-NATURED MAN



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TORONTO



AN ARREST FOR DEBT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The Good-Natured Man

By
Oliver Goldsmith

With Introduction and Notes by
Robert Herring, M.A.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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The Frontispiece is taken from Hogarth's famous series, "The Rake's Progress." The young profligate on his way to Court is arrested for debt by two bailiffs as he steps out of his sedan-chair. A young milliner comes to the rescue of her former lover with a purse containing her savings. On the left is a Welshman with a leek in his hat, showing that the incident takes place on *St. David's Day* (March 1st). On the right a boy is stealing the young man's cane as he lets it fall in his dismay. St. James's Palace is seen in the background.

INTRODUCTION

1. LIFE AND CHARACTER

GOLDSMITH was born in the village of Pallas in Ireland in 1728. His early guardians were his father, an improvident clergyman, and a schoolmaster who had served in Spain in the War of the Succession. These, if they did not impart to him his love of travel and financial recklessness, at any rate brought these qualities to an earlier flowering than those by which Dr. Johnson would have him remembered.

Irregularities of temper and habits of boisterous merry-making made his career at Trinity College, Dublin, whither he went in 1774, rather stormy, and, though poor, he was little prepared for any profession when he took his B.A. degree five years later. Through the support of an uncle, the Rev. T. Contarine, he studied, first law, in England, then medicine in Edinburgh. After a year and a half, his love of travel (which was due more to restlessness than curiosity) suggested that he would profit by study at Leyden. Thence, he roamed through France and Italy, acquiring somewhere the title of "Doctor." Incidents of this tour, though they barely supplied him with a living, offered much material for a "Life" to later biographers, who painted a pretty picture of his whistling his way round Europe, because he often sought, by his flute, to pay in chiming notes for his night's lodging what he could not pay in clinking coin.

In 1756 he arrived in London, alone and destitute (his uncle having died), to try his fortune. He became in turn usher, shopman, chemist and medical practitioner. It must be

remembered that his gift for writing was still undiscovered, and it was need, not ambition, that drove him to seek work from the booksellers. This was undoubtedly a period of great privation, manfully endured. He nearly took a post as physician to one of our factories in India ; but, though it was worth £1000 a year, he threw it up (for reasons that were never clear) and entered into articles with one Griffiths to write for the *Monthly Review*. His own early work was later reviewed in it with illiberal severity.

The first of these works was the *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning* (1759), which established him as a learned, elegant writer and won both the friendship and help of Smollett. Though still poor, he now had work ; but however much work he had, he would still have been poor, for when he had money he spent it, and only when that was gone did he set about finding more. In 1761 he met Dr. Johnson, who became his staunch friend and champion. Through him this stuttering, riotous, vain and generous little Irishman was admitted to the best literary circles. In the same year he had finished *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which, published five years later, contains many incidents from his own life and furnished several for *She Stoops to Conquer*. In 1762 a *Life of Beau Nash* appeared, a delightful piece of writing and a valuable picture of fashionable England. Various other books, mostly hack-work, enabled him by this time to be living in the Temple, entertaining lavishly and dressing to correspond. In 1765, however, he published *The Traveller*, a poem whose force is at once evident behind the rather stilted diction of the time with which Goldsmith contented himself. This work was the cumulation of much hope and drudgery, and it met with an immediate success. Being poetry, of course, it brought in little money ; and so, after another period of book-making, he wrote a comedy, *The Good-Natured Man*, which was produced at Covent Garden in 1768. It was resolutely against most of the dramatic fashions of the time, but the

author gained from it £500, which sent him into orgies of entertaining and expense that soon necessitated another seclusion at Islington, productive of histories of Rome, Greece and England, and *Lives* of Parnell and Bolingbroke.

He was, however, ambitious to "strike again for honest fame," and in 1770 he achieved this with his second long poem, *The Deserted Village*. Three years later he produced *She Stoops to Conquer*; and in 1774, with a new play in his head, he died, heavily in debt, despite the success of the second comedy.

He had been both charitable and extravagant to excess; his vanity made him the prey of flatterers, while his simplicity exposed him to dupes, and when, as he was dying, they asked if his mind was at peace, he replied, "It is not"—words that might be considered and remembered more often than other of the utterances which are used to make such a light-opera figure of "poor Noll."

He was buried, on April 9th, 1774, in the Temple burying-ground, in a spot not now known, but a monument by Nolletkens was erected in Westminster Abbey, with Johnson's famous epitaph that includes "Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit." We may wish he had not had to touch so many kinds not worth his talent, but this was due to his character, which also gave us a few treasurable plays, poems and essays of a freshness rare in the eighteenth century and of a charm scarcely surpassed anywhere in English literature.

2. DRAMA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The reader seeking to trace from the plays of the late eighteenth century the dramatic trend of the period, will constantly find himself confronted with the term "sentimental comedy." He may think he knows what this means; but as he goes on, through essay and epilogue, he will become

aware that the phrase has an importance larger than he at first thought. It comes up again and again, with a meaning over and above the separate meanings of the two words, "sentimental" and "comedy," and it is useless going on with one's study of the drama unless one is quite sure what this meaning is.

Towards the end of the century there set in many changes in social life. "Social and economic conditions were moving in the direction of a change greater than any since the break-up of the Middle Ages." The early and middle decades had been periods of prosperity, but the general improvement of life in those years was hampered by the need for economy that marked the century's turn. Thus the most influential grade in society was ceasing to be the aristocracy, their place being taken by the middle classes, who had risen during the earlier period. These brought to their new position all their heavy and slightly hypocritical qualities which the older aristocracy was too weak to repudiate and too impoverished to refine. This change may be summed up by saying that manners relaxed while morals became more severe. All of this had its effect on the drama, and the result was "sentimental comedy."

The pseudo-classical spirit of the age had, by the late eighteenth century, destroyed serious drama, and the changing type of audience, middle-class, squeamish, but unrefined, had no taste for the old comedies of manners. They preferred farce, but at the same time they had a horror of anything that was "low." They could enjoy the *mots* of Congreve but they would not endure his morals. In fact, though folly and vice might be represented, their inevitable consequences could not be put upon the stage. Some redeeming trait had to be made manifest in the last act, some piece of mock modesty had to triumph.

This, coinciding with the early struggling for expression of romanticism, led to comedy becoming watered down and

sentimentalised. Prevailing conditions being uncongenial to creative work of the first order, dramatists found it easier to ransack the Elizabethans and Carolines for plays which they could adapt. Jonson, Shirley, Beaumont and Fletcher, above all Shakespeare, in his romantic comedies, were all popular once they had been altered to suit the false morality of the time. It must be remembered that the French Revolution was in the air, and that in the year *She Stoops to Conquer* was produced (1773) the American War of Independence began. People's nerves were on edge and their minds were hazy: they did not wish to face any facts they disliked; they wanted to alter them if they could and dream about them in a softer light. Clarity of thought gave way to a misty emotionalism, and eyes brimmed with tears that had once glanced mockingly from behind fans. Comedy lost its sharp edge and became sentimental; and sentimental comedy reigned supreme through the work of such writers as Cumberland, Kelly and Reynolds. It became evident that, if this tendency was allowed to go too far, the spirit of laughter would be entirely crushed out. Goldsmith and Sheridan, though they led the attack, were neither alone nor first: many writers raised voice against the tyranny, and the two greater dramatists merely stood out by reason of the superiority of their gifts.

In 1759, Goldsmith had attacked the sentimental dramatists in *The Present State of Polite Learning*, and nine years later he put his theories into practice with the present comedy.

3. THE GOOD-NATURED MAN: ITS IMPORTANCE

This play is thus more important for what it represents than for what it is. Fresh and amusing though it be, it abounds in crudities which would have prevented it from holding its high position in English literature had it not also a quality which makes it represent a definite reaction from the accepted plays of the day. This quality is a return to

nature. The play was a new departure. It dealt with "low" persons in "low" situations.

Nearly all the plays of the period treated of the foibles of fashion: Goldsmith chose the humours and characters of ordinary persons, who were not reduced to one pattern by affectation. The dangers of such a proceeding, as well as the reasons that led him to undertake it, may be gathered from his preface to the play.

Comedy had to be "genteel," and with that object had frequently to shun "nature"; and the efforts of dramatists to preserve the wit while altering the spirit of earlier writers had led to a falsification of character which persisted when they wrote plays of their own. Against this shunning and this falsification Goldsmith stood out. He thought little more *ought* to be desired by an audience than nature and humour, and he added truculently, "in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous." He himself found it conspicuous in the profession of bailiffs, but this scene, as is well known, proved too "low" to suit the public taste, "grown of late, perhaps, too delicate," and it was removed. Nevertheless, he had made the public accept a play different from those to which they were accustomed. Here were no scenes of high life, no amorous flirtations; here were no smart epigrams, no scandals thinly veiled. The girls go through his play unscathed, and the married women indulge in no intrigues. What he offers instead are brisk dialogue, amusing situations only rarely improbable, and, above all, a sense of character. The remarks which please in this play are always the remarks that spring from the very source of the person's being. Croaker is never so amusing as when he is most definitely Croaker, Lofty never so fantastic as when he is most Lofty, and this means that the humour is alive and natural, and that the characters are individuals, not a collection of characteristics poured into a mould. *The Good-Natured Man* is not a great play, but it contains some great characters, and it is a play

by means of which health and humour were breathed into English comedy at a time when it was dying for lack of them. It dared to step out of the conventional at a time when that convention was choking itself to death ; and to do that and be amusing, honest and unaffected also, is an achievement, and one reason why the play holds a position which at first sight it may not seem to deserve, or which other plays may seem to deserve equally. The truth is that these other plays owe to the energy of Goldsmith their being ; they could not have been written had he not first set the example.

4. ITS CONSTRUCTION AND CHARACTERISATION

The play has many of the faults of a first play ; it begins heavily, the opening dialogue is stilted, and throughout there is too much explanatory talking through the character *at* the audience—for example, the first conversation of Leontine and Olivia. But Goldsmith knew what he wanted to do, and though he occasionally stumbled in feeling his way, it cannot be denied that he did it.

He had the theme of a man whose good nature was due more to a fear of offending than to a desire to satisfy, and he developed it, though with unnecessary complications, which were again a fault of inexperience. Feeling that his main character might not be sufficiently interesting to the people of the day, he sought to add other interests. He put in secondary plot and counter plot ; these are really distractions. They do not add to the interest of the central figure, but set up, in the affairs of Leontine and Olivia, other interests. Goldsmith did not quite believe his idea was sufficiently engaging in itself, and he had not the courage to make it so. He threw in other interests as sops. But it must be remembered that he was doing something new ; he was deliberately challenging public taste, and a little nervousness was natural.

It is extraordinary to see how skilfully he wove all his

threads into a whole, for the play is perfectly manageable, with this main defect of diffused interest, which is seen in the two figures of Croaker and Lofty, who overshadow the Good-Natured Man. It was for this reason that Garrick refused the play; he objected to Lofty. Croaker to a certain extent sets off Honeywood; his suspicion and gloom contrast with Honeywood's open hand and heart. But Lofty professes the same disinterestedness as Honeywood practises, and this is a subtlety not wholly agreeable to an actor who wishes to shine alone. It is a subtlety, too, perhaps too delicate for successful stage handling. We now can appreciate the belief in Lofty felt by the ordinary world (represented by Mrs. Croaker). To such a person, because he insisted on respect, respect was given; whereas Honeywood, genuinely modest, was too afraid of saying a bad word for anyone but Miss Richland to offer him a good one once his back was turned.

Honeywood is not clever. He lets himself become the victim of his own kindness, and nearly loses his mistress and his friend. He is not definite enough; he has nature, but not character, and Goldsmith shows the difference between the two by putting him face to face with men who, in their own way, were men of character. Throughout the play Honeywood is ready to agree and sympathise, until in the fourth act he is agreeing and disagreeing with Mr. and Mrs. Croaker alternately. Only by the end, after many vicissitudes, has he learnt to be himself.

The character of Lofty, though similar in its effect of winning favour, derives from an opposite source. Lofty plays upon the good nature of others. He seeks not to win their opinion, but to impress upon them his own high value of himself. Instead of being used by them, as is Honeywood, he deliberately uses their claims and appeals for his own ends. But because he relies upon others (and this is where he comes near to Honeywood) to build up his character, he too falls. No more than the Good-Natured Man can he stand by him-

self. Only Croaker, it should be noticed, undergoes no change. Throughout, he is his own man, he relies on no one. The whole of life is material for his gloom, and when real sorrows come he finds that the advantage of fretting over misfortunes beforehand has been that "we never feel them when they come." He takes encouragement from that to continue his dismal forebodings: his last words being, when he sees content all round, "Heaven send we be all better this day three months." Wrong as his philosophy may be, he is strong in it; and that, Goldsmith says, is the thing.

It will be seen that Croaker and Lofty, by the strength of Goldsmith's creating, overshadow the main figure. Logically, according to the play's construction, they should not, but actually they do. They take matters into their own hands, and live so exuberantly as to make the scenery rock and the footlights pale. These two characters are what most lives for us in this comedy. A pedant may say they spoil the play, but they give it its life, being creations of the spirit; and in comparison with that, nothing matters. These two, Croaker and Lofty, are Shakespearean. Just as many characters, Falstaff, Iago, Shylock, came to life in the poet's hands, and usurped more than their place in the play, because Shakespeare was suddenly inspired by them; so these two, brought in to give weight, came to life in Goldsmith's hands. Without them the play would be of interest only as a document in the history of the theatre, a turning-point that marked the stand made by an author against sentimental comedy. Had that happened, *The Good-Natured Man* would be respected but little read, and we should have lost the humour of the "incendiary letter" (Act 4) and the satire of Lofty's first entrance (Act 2). It is these characters who upset the balance but retain the life of the play.

Yet, successful as these two are, it must not be forgotten that, if Honeywood is less interesting, it is because with him Goldsmith was trying to do a much harder thing. This was

nothing less than to insist to the public that the qualities of charm, generosity, politeness and self-sacrifice which they generally admire, may spring as often as not from motives comparatively base—from weakness and vanity. That Honeywood was to be unconscious of this till the end of the play made the portrait harder. It is easy to win applause when all that is asked is that one agree; easy to be thought kind when all that is wanted is that one comply. Goldsmith knew this; he said, in effect, that a man has to make a stand, he has to endure censure if he is to do any good. He made Croaker stand alone and put up with ridicule. But then Croaker suddenly presented opportunities for a latent gift of characterisation: a sense of humour proved too strong, and Croaker came alive, refusing to remain a moral personification.

The theme of this play is, therefore, serious. Goldsmith is often represented as a poet who worked simply to earn money, or at least in a hurry that was inconsistent with seeking to deserve fame. But a little examination will show that he put a great deal of thought and some serious philosophy into the conception of his first play. If the execution is cruder, this is because the play *was*, after all, his first.

5. ITS ACTION

Miss Richland is the centre of the plot, though she is not its central figure. It is the reactions of the principal characters to her fortune or herself that form the interest, and she it is who resolves the problems of Honeywood, Croaker and Lofty.

Each of these has a separate plot. Lofty's is dramatically the least important, serving as a link between the other two. The participants in Honeywood's plot are Sir William and Jarvis, in Croaker's, his son Leontine and Olivia. Sir William Honeywood, seeking to prove to his nephew the

weakness of his supposed benevolence, has him arrested for debt for which he, Sir William, has already gone security. Miss Richland, not knowing this, uses her fortune to pay the debt. This is balanced by Croaker's anxiety to get hold of Miss Richland's fortune by marriage with his son, of whose engagement he knows nothing.

Leontine, therefore, that he may not rouse his father's suspicions, continues the suit, hoping to be refused. Miss Richland discovers that Olivia is not his sister (as is thought), but his sweetheart, and so she also is compliant; if the refusal is hers, she loses half her fortune. Leontine being already engaged, she thinks all will be well, and that young Honeywood will eventually see how favourably she regards him. This humorous situation causes Leontine to elope with Olivia (it will be seen that he, a resourceful young man, is another foil to Honeywood). To do this, he applies to Honeywood for money. The second plot thus links up with the first, for Sir William has put bailiffs in charge of his nephew. Lofty hopes to win Miss Richland himself. He thus sees to it that she visits Honeywood in his distress, hoping this will turn her against him. It has the opposite effect. Lofty then quickly plays upon Honeywood, saying it is he who has enlarged him, to urge his suit with Miss Richland. This the good-natured man eagerly does.

A servant's mistake causes Leontine's request for money to fall accidentally into Croaker's hands. Croaker applies as usual to Honeywood for advice (he has made Honeywood instrumental in the match between Leontine and Miss Richland, which is one of the reasons why the young man is so slow to take the girl's hints), and the two go off to the appointed rendezvous. All the plots are discovered and set right by the arrival of Sir William and Miss Richland, who have arrived through the assistance of another servant.

GOLDSMITH'S PREFACE

WHEN I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term "genteel comedy" was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous. The author of the following scenes never imagined that more would be expected of him, and therefore to delineate character has been his principal aim. Those who know anything of composition are sensible that, in pursuing 10 humour, it will sometimes lead us into the recesses of the mean; I was even tempted to look for it in the master of a spunging-house; but in deference to the public taste, grown of late, perhaps, too delicate, the scene of the bailiffs was retrenched in the representation. In deference also to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way, the scene is here restored. The author submits it to the reader in his closet; and hopes that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French 20 theatre. Indeed, the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

Upon the whole, the author returns his thanks to the

public for the favourable reception which *The Good-Natured Man* has met with ; and to Mr. Colman in particular for his kindness to it. It may not also be improper to assure any who shall hereafter write for the
30 theatre, that merit, or supposed merit, will ever be a sufficient passport to his protection.

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY DR. JOHNSON ; SPOKEN BY MR. BENSLEY

Press'd by the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind ;
With cool submission joins the lab'ring train,
And social sorrow loses half its pain :
Our anxious hard, without complaint, may share
This bustling season's epidemic care,
Like Cæsar's pilot, dignified by fate,
Tost in one common storm with all the great ;
Distrest alike, the statesman and the wit,
When one a borough courts, and one the pit, 10
The busy candidates for power and fame
Have hopes, and fears, and wishes, just the same ;
Disabled both to combat, or to fly,
Must hear all taunts, and hear without reply.
Uncheck'd on both loud rabbles vent their rage,
As mongrels bay the lion in a cage.
Th' offended burgess hoards his angry tale
For that blest year when all that vote may rail ;
Their schemes of spite the poet's foes dismiss
Till that glad night when all that hate may hiss. 20
" This day the powder'd curls and golden coat,"
Says swelling Crispin, " begg'd a cobbler's vote."
" This night our wit." the pert apprentice cries,

“ Lies at my feet—I hiss him, and he dies.”
The great, 'tis true, can charm the electing tribe ;
The bard may supplicate, but cannot bribe.
Yet judg'd by those whose voices ne'er were sold,
He feels no want of ill-persuading gold ;
But confident of praise, if praise be due,
Trusts without fear, to merit, and to you. 30

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

MR. HONEYWOOD	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Powell.</i>
CROAKER	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Shuter.</i>
LOFTY	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Woodward.</i>
SIR WILLIAM HONEYWOOD	-	-			<i>Mr. Clarke.</i>
LEONTINE	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Bensley.</i>
JARVIS	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Dunstall.</i>
BUTLER	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Cushing.</i>
BAILIFF	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. R. Smith.</i>
DUBARDIEU	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Holtom.</i>
POSTBOY	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Quick.</i>

WOMEN

MISS RICHLAND	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Bulkley.</i>
OLIVIA	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Mattocks.</i>
MRS. CROAKER	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Pitt.</i>
GARNET	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Green.</i>
LANDLADY	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. White.</i>

SCENE—*London.*

ACT THE FIRST

SCENE—*An Apartment in Young HONEYWOOD'S House*

Enter SIR WILLIAM HONEYWOOD and JARVIS.

Sir Wil. Good Jarvis, make no apologies for this honest bluntness. Fidelity, like yours, is the best excuse for every freedom.

Jar. I can't help being blunt, and being very angry too, when I hear you talk of disinheriting so good, so worthy a young gentleman as your nephew, my master. All the world loves him.

Sir Wil. Say rather, that he loves all the world ; that is his fault.

Jar. I am sure there is no part of it more dear to him 10 than you are, though he has not seen you since he was a child.

Sir Wil. What signifies his affection to me ; or how can I be proud of a place in a heart, where every sharper and coxcomb find an easy entrance ?

Jar. I grant you that he is rather too good-natured ; that he's too much every man's man ; that he laughs this minute with one, and cries the next with another : but whose instructions may he thank for all this ?

Sir Wil. Not mine, sure ? My letters to him during 20 my employment in Italy taught him only that philosophy which might prevent, not defend his errors.

Jar. Faith, begging your honour's pardon, I'm sorry they taught him any philosophy at all ; it has only served to spoil him. This same philosophy is a good horse in the stable, but an arrant jade on a journey. For my own part, whenever I hear him mention the name on't, I'm always sure he's going to play the fool.

Sir Wil. Don't let us ascribe his faults to his philosophy, I entreat you. No, Jarvis, his good-nature arises rather from his fears of offending the importunate, than his desire of making the deserving happy.

Jar. What it rises from, I don't know. But, to be sure, everybody has it, that asks it.

Sir Wil. Ay, or that does not ask it. I have been now for some time a concealed spectator of his follies, and find them as boundless as his dissipation.

Jar. And yet, faith, he has some fine name or other for them all. He calls his extravagance generosity ; and his trusting everybody, universal benevolence. It was but last week he went security for a fellow whose face he scarce knew, and that he called an act of exalted munificence ; ay, that was the name he gave it.

Sir Wil. And upon that I proceed, as my last effort, though with very little hopes to reclaim him. That very fellow has just absconded, and I have taken up the security. Now, my intention is to involve him in fictitious distress, before he has plunged himself into real calamity : to arrest him for that very debt ; to clap an officer upon him, and then let him see which of his friends will come to his relief.

Jar. Well, if I could but any way see him thoroughly vexed, every groan of his would be music to me ; yet, faith, I believe it impossible. I have tried to fret him

myself every morning these three years ; but, instead of being angry, he sits as calmly to hear me scold, as he does to his hair-dresser.

Sir Wil. We must try him once more, however, and I'll go this instant to put my scheme into execution ; and I don't despair of succeeding, as, by your means, I 60 can have frequent opportunities of being about him without being known. What a pity it is, Jarvis, that any man's goodwill to others should produce so much neglect of himself, as to require correction ! Yet we must touch his weaknesses with a delicate hand. There are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue. [*Exit.*]

Jar. Well, go thy ways, Sir William Honeywood. It is not without reason that the world allows thee to be the best of men. But here comes his hopeful nephew ; the 70 strange good-natured, foolish, open-hearted—And yet, all his faults are such that one loves him still the better for them.

Enter HONEYWOOD

Hon. Well, Jarvis, what messages from my friends this morning ?

Jar. You have no friends.

Hon. Well ; from my acquaintance then ?

Jar. [*Pulling out bills.*—A few of our usual cards of compliment, that's all. This bill from your tailor ; this from your mercer ; and this from the little broker in 80 Crooked Lane. He says he has been at a great deal of trouble to get back the money you borrowed.

Hon. That I don't know ; but I'm sure we were at a great deal of trouble in getting him to lend it.

Jar. He has lost all patience.

Hon. Then he has lost a very good thing.

Jar. There's that ten guineas you were sending to the poor gentleman and his children in the Fleet. I believe that would stop his mouth for a while at least.

90 *Hon.* Ay, Jarvis, but what will fill their mouths in the mean time? Must I be cruel, because he happens to be importunate; and, to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress?

Jar. 'Sdeath! sir, the question now is how to relieve yourself; yourself.—Haven't I reason to be out of my senses, when I see things going at sixes and sevens?

Hon. Whatever reason you may have for being out of your senses, I hope you'll allow that I'm not quite unreasonable for continuing in mine.

100 *Jar.* You are the only man alive in your present situation that could do so. Everything upon the waste. There's Miss Richland and her fine fortune gone already, and upon the point of being given to your rival—

Hon. I'm no man's rival.

Jar. Your uncle in Italy preparing to disinherit you; your own fortune almost spent; and nothing but pressing creditors, false friends, and a pack of drunken servants that your kindness has made unfit for any other family.

110 *Hon.* Then they have the more occasion for being in mine.

Jar. Soh! What will you have done with him that I caught stealing your plate in the pantry? In the fact; I caught him in the fact.

Hon. In the fact? If so, I really think that we should pay him his wages and turn him off.

Jar. He shall be turned off at Tyburn, the dog ; we'll hang him, if it be only to frighten the rest of the family.

Hon. No, Jarvis ; it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen ; let us not add to it the loss of a fellow-creature ! 120

Jar. Very fine ! Well, here was the footman just now, to complain of the butler : he says he does most work, and ought to have most wages.

Hon. That's but just ; though perhaps here comes the butler to complain of the footman.

Jar. Ay, it's the way with them all, from the scullion to the privy-councillor. If they have a bad master, they keep quarrelling with him ; if they have a good master, they keep quarrelling with one another. 130

Enter BUTLER, drunk

But. Sir, I'll not stay in the family with Jonathan ; you must part with him, or part with me ; that's the ex—ex—exposition of the matter, sir.

Hon. Full and explicit enough. But what's his fault, good Philip ?

But. Sir, he's given to drinking, sir, and I shall have my morals corrupted by keeping such company.

Hon. Ha ! ha ! he has such a diverting way—

Jar. Oh, quite amusing.

But. I find my wine's a-going, sir ; and liquors don't go without mouths, sir ; I hate a drunkard, sir. 140

Hon. Well, well, Philip, I'll hear you upon that another time ; so go to bed now.

Jar. To bed ! let him go to the devil.

But. Begging your honour's pardon, and begging your pardon, master Jarvis, I'll not go to bed, nor to the devil

neither. I have enough to do to mind my cellar. I forgot, your honour, Mr. Croaker is below. I came on purpose to tell you.

150 *Hon.* Why didn't you show him up, blockhead ?

But. Show him up, sir ! With all my heart, sir. Up or down, all's one to me. [*Exit.*]

Jar. Ay, we have one or other of that family in this house from morning till night. He comes on the old affair, I suppose. The match between his son that's just returned from Paris, and Miss Richland, the young lady he's guardian to.

Hon. Perhaps so. Mr. Croaker, knowing my friendship for the young lady, has got it into his head that I can
160 persuade her to what I please.

Jar. Ah ! if you loved yourself but half as well as she loves you, we should soon see a marriage that would set all things to rights again.

Hon. Love me ! Sure, Jarvis, you dream. No, no ; her intimacy with me never amounted to more than mere friendship—mere friendship. That she is the most lovely woman that ever warmed the human heart with desire, I own. But never let me harbour a thought of making her unhappy, by a connection with one so unworthy her merits
170 as I am. No, Jarvis, it shall be my study to serve her, even in spite of my wishes ; and to secure her happiness, though it destroys my own.

Jar. Was ever the like ? I want patience.

Hon. Besides, Jarvis, though I could obtain Miss Richland's consent, do you think I could succeed with her guardian, or Mrs. Croaker, his wife ; who though both very fine in their way, are yet a little opposite in their dispositions, you know ?

Jar. Opposite enough, Heaven knows! the very reverse of each other: she, all laugh and no joke; he 180 always complaining and never sorrowful; a fretful poor soul, that has a new distress for every hour in the four and twenty—

Hon. Hush, hush, he's coming up, he'll hear you.

Jar. One whose voice is a passing-bell—

Hon. Well, well; go, do.

Jar. A raven that bodes nothing but mischief; a coffin and cross-bones; a bundle of rue; a sprig of deadly nightshade: a—(HONEYWOOD, *stopping his mouth, at last pushes him off*). *Exit JARVIS.* 190

Hon. I must own, my old monitor is not entirely wrong. There is something in my friend Croaker's conversation that entirely depresses me. His very mirth is quite an antidote to all gaiety, and his appearance has a stronger effect on my spirits than an undertaker's shop.—Mr. Croaker, this is such a satisfaction——

Enter CROAKER

Cro. A pleasant morning to Mr. Honeywood, and many of them. How is this! you look most shockingly to-day, my dear friend. I hope this weather does not affect your spirits. To be sure, if this weather continues 200—I say nothing—But God send we be all better this day three months!

Hon. I heartily concur in the wish, though, I own, not in your apprehensions.

Cro. May be not. Indeed, what signifies what weather we have in a country going to ruin like ours? Taxes rising and trade falling. Money flying out of the kingdom, and Jesuits swarming into it. I know at this time

no less than a hundred and twenty-seven Jesuits between Charing Cross and Temple Bar.

Hon. The Jesuits will scarce pervert you or me, I should hope.

Cro. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whom they pervert in a country that has scarce any religion to lose ? I'm only afraid for our wives and daughters.

Hon. I have no apprehensions for the ladies, I assure you.

Cro. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whether they be perverted or no ? The women in my time were
220 good for something. I have seen a lady drest from top to toe in her own manufactures formerly. But now-a-days the devil a thing of their own manufacture's about them, except their faces.

Hon. But, however these faults may be practised abroad, you don't find them at home, either with Mrs. Croaker, Olivia, or Miss Richland.

Cro. The best of them will never be canonised for a saint when she's dead. By the bye, my dear friend, I don't find this match between Miss Richland and my son
230 much relished, either by one side or t'other.

Hon. I thought otherwise.

Cro. Ah, Mr. Honeywood, a little of your fine serious advice to the young lady might go far : I know she has a very exalted opinion of your understanding.

Hon. But would not that be usurping an authority that more properly belongs to yourself ?

Cro. My dear friend, you know but little of my authority at home. People think, indeed, because they see me come out in a morning thus, with a pleasant face,
240 and to make my friends merry, that all's well within.

But I have cares that would break a heart of stone. My wife has so encroached upon every one of my privileges, that I'm now no more than a mere lodger in my own house.

Hon. But a little spirit exerted on your side might perhaps restore your authority.

Cro. No, though I had the spirit of a lion ! I do rouse sometimes. But what then ? Always haggling and haggling. A man is tired of getting the better before his wife is tired of losing the victory. 250

Hon. It is a melancholy consideration indeed, that our chief comforts often produce our greatest anxieties, and that an increase of our possessions is but an inlet to new disquietudes.

Cro. Ah, my dear friend, these were the very words of poor Dick Doleful to me not a week before he made away with himself. Indeed, Mr. Honeywood, I never see you but you put me in mind of poor Dick. Ah, there was merit neglected for you ! and so true a friend ! we loved each other for thirty years, and yet he never asked 260 me to lend him a single farthing.

Hon. Pray what could induce him to commit so rash an action at last ? .

Cro. I don't know : some people were malicious enough to say it was keeping company with me ; because we used to meet now and then and open our hearts to each other. To be sure I loved to hear him talk, and he loved to hear me talk ; poor dear Dick ! He used to say that Croaker rhymed to joker ; and so we used to laugh.—Poor Dick ! [*Going to cry.*] 270

Hon. His fate affects me.

Cro. Ah, he grew sick of this miserable life, where we

do nothing but eat and grow hungry, dress and undress, get up and lie down ; while reason, that should watch like a nurse by our side, falls as fast asleep as we do.

Hon. To say truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come, by that which we have past, the prospect is hideous.

Cro. Life at the greatest and best is but a froward
280 child, that must be humoured and coaxed a little till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over.

Hon. Very true, sir ; nothing can exceed the vanity of our existence, but the folly of our pursuits. We wept when we came into the world, and every day tells us why.

Cro. Ah, my dear friend, it is a perfect satisfaction to be miserable with you. My dear son Leontine shan't lose the benefit of such fine conversation. I'll just step home for him. I am willing to show him so much seriousness in one scarce older than himself. And what
290 if I bring my last letter to the *Gazetteer* on the increase and progress of earthquakes ? It will amuse us, I promise you. I there prove how the late earthquake is coming round to pay us another visit, from London to Lisbon, from Lisbon to the Canary Islands, from the Canary Islands to Palmyra, from Palmyra to Constantinople, and so from Constantinople back to London again.

[*Exit.*

Hon. Poor Croaker ! his situation deserves the utmost pity. I shall scarce recover my spirits these three days. Sure, to live upon such terms is worse than death itself !
300 And yet when I consider my own situation,—a broken fortune, a hopeless passion, friends in distress, the wish but not the power to serve them—(*pausing and sighing.*)

Enter BUTLER

But. More company below, sir ; Mrs. Croaker and Miss Richland : shall I show them up ? But they're showing up themselves. [Exit.

Enter MRS. CROAKER and MISS RICHLAND

Miss Rich. You're always in such spirits.

Mrs. Cro. We have just come, my dear Honeywood, from the auction. There was the old deaf dowager, as usual, bidding like a fury against herself. And then so curious in antiques ! herself the most genuine piece of antiquity in the whole collection.

Hon. Excuse me, ladies, if some uneasiness from friendship makes me unfit to share in this good-humour : I know you'll pardon me.

Mrs. Cro. I vow he seems as melancholy as if he had taken a dose of my husband this morning. Well, if Richland here can pardon you, I must.

Miss Rich. You would seem to insinuate, madam, that I have particular reasons for being disposed to refuse it.

Mrs. Cro. Whatever I insinuate, my dear, don't be so ready to wish an explanation.

Miss Rich. I own I should be sorry Mr. Honeywood's long friendship and mine should be misunderstood.

Hon. There's no answering for others, madam. But I hope you'll never find me presuming to offer more than the most delicate friendship may readily allow.

Miss Rich. And I shall be prouder of such a tribute from you, than the most passionate professions from others.

Hon. My own sentiments, madam : friendship is a disinterested commerce between equals ; love, an abject intercourse between tyrants and slaves.

Miss Rich. And, without a compliment, I know none more disinterested, or more capable of friendship, than Mr. Honeywood.

Mrs. Cro. And, indeed, I know nobody that has more friends, at least among the ladies. Miss Fruzz, Miss Odd-
340 body, and Miss Winterbottom praise him in all companies. As for Miss Biddy Bundle, she's his professed admirer.

Miss Rich. Indeed ! an admirer ! I did not know, sir, you were such a favourite there. But is she seriously so handsome ? Is she the mighty thing talked of ?

Hon. The town, madam, seldom begins to praise a lady's beauty, till she's beginning to lose it—(smiling).

Mrs. Cro. But she's resolved never to lose it, it seems ; for, as her natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one. Well, nothing diverts me
350 more than one of these fine, old, dressy things, who thinks to conceal her age, by everywhere exposing her person ; sticking herself up in the front of a side-box ; trailing through a minuet at Almack's ; and then, in the public gardens, looking for all the world like one of the painted ruins of the place.

Hon. Every age has its admirers, ladies. While you, perhaps, are trading among the warmer climates of youth, there ought to be some to carry on a useful commerce in the frozen latitudes beyond fifty.

360 *Miss Rich.* But, then, the mortifications they must suffer before they can be fitted out for traffic. I have seen one of them fret a whole morning at her hair-dresser, when all the fault was her face.

Hon. And yet, I'll engage, has carried that face at last to a very good market. This good-natured town, madam, has husbands, like spectacles, to fit every age, from fifteen to fourscore.

Mrs. Cro. Well, you're a dear, good-natured creature. But you know you're engaged with us this morning upon a strolling party. I want to show Olivia the town, and 370 the things; I believe I shall have business for you for the whole day.

Hon. I am sorry, madam, I have an appointment with Mr. Croaker, which it is impossible to put off.

Mrs. Cro. What! with my husband? Then I'm resolved to take no refusal. Nay, I protest you must. You know I never laugh so much as with you.

Hon. Why, if I must, I must. I'll swear you have put me into such spirits. Well, do you find jest, and I'll find laugh, I promise you. We'll wait for the chariot in 380 the next room. [*Excunt.*

Enter LEONTINE and OLIVIA

Leon. There they go, thoughtless and happy. My dearest Olivia, what would I give to see you capable of sharing in their amusements, and as cheerful as they are!

Oliv. How, my Leontine, how can I be cheerful, when I have so many terrors to oppress me? The fear of being detected by this family, and the apprehensions of a censuring world, when I must be detected——

Leon. The world, my love! what can it say? At worst it can only say that, being compelled by a mer- 390 cenary guardian to embrace a life you disliked, you formed a resolution of flying with the man of your choice; that you confided in his honour, and took refuge

in my father's house ; the only one where yours could remain without censure.

Oliv. But consider, Leontine, your disobedience and my indiscretion ; your being sent to France to bring home a sister, and, instead of a sister, bringing home——

Leon. One dearer than a thousand sisters. One that
400 I am convinced will be equally dear to the rest of the family, when she comes to be known.

Oliv. And that, I fear, will shortly be.

Leon. Impossible, till we ourselves think proper to make the discovery. My sister, you know, has been with her aunt, at Lyons, since she was a child, and you find every creature in the family takes you for her.

Oliv. But mayn't she write, mayn't her aunt write ?

Leon. Her aunt scarce ever writes, and all my sister's letters are directed to me.

410 *Oliv.* But won't your refusing Miss Richland, for whom you know the old gentleman intends you, create a suspicion ?

Leon. There, there's my master-stroke. I have resolved not to refuse her ; nay, an hour hence I have consented to go with my father to make her an offer of my heart and fortune.

Oliv. Your heart and fortune !

Leon. Don't be alarmed, my dearest. Can Olivia think so meanly of my honour or my love, as to suppose
420 I could ever hope for happiness from any but her ? No, my Olivia, neither the force, nor, permit me to add, the delicacy of my passion, leave any room to suspect me. I only offer Miss Richland a heart I am convinced she will refuse ; as I am confident that, without knowing it, her affections are fixed upon Mr. Honeywood.

Oliv. Mr. Honeywood! You'll excuse my apprehensions; but when your merits come to be put in the balance——

Leon. You view them with too much partiality. However, by making this offer, I show a seeming compliance with my father's command; and, perhaps, upon her refusal, I may have his consent to choose for myself. 430

Oliv. Well, I submit. And yet, my Leontine, I own I shall envy her even your pretended addresses. I consider every look, every expression of your esteem, as due only to me. This is folly, perhaps: I allow it: but it is natural to suppose, that merit which has made an impression on one's own heart, may be powerful over that of another. 440

Leon. Don't, my life's treasure, don't let us make imaginary evils, when you know we have so many real ones to encounter. At worst, you know, if Miss Richland should consent, or my father refuse his pardon, it can but end in a trip to Scotland; and——

Enter CROAKER

Cro. Where have you been, boy? I have been seeking you. My friend Honeywood here has been saying such comfortable things. Ah! he's an example indeed. Where is he? I left him here.

Leon. Sir, I believe you may see him, and hear him too, in the next room; he's preparing to go out with the ladies. 450

Cro. Good gracious! can I believe my eyes or my ears! I'm struck dumb with his vivacity, and stunned with the loudness of his laugh. Was there ever such a

transformation ! (*A laugh behind the scenes. CROAKER mimics it.*) Ha ! ha ! ha ! there it goes : a plague take their balderdash ! Yet I could expect nothing less, when my precious wife was of the party. On my conscience,
460 I believe she could spread a horse-laugh through the pews of a tabernacle.

Leon. Since you find so many objections to a wife, sir, how can you be so earnest in recommending one to me ?

Cro. I have told you, and tell you again, boy, that Miss Richland's fortune must not go out of the family ; one may find comfort in the money, whatever one does in the wife.

Leon. But, sir, though, in obedience to your desire, I am ready to marry her, it may be possible she has no
470 inclination to me.

Cro. I'll tell you once for all how it stands. A good part of Miss Richland's large fortune consists in a claim upon Government, which my good friend, Mr. Lofty, assures me the Treasury will allow. One half of this she is to forfeit, by her father's will, in case she refuses to marry you. So, if she rejects you, we seize half her fortune ; if she accepts you, we seize the whole, and a fine girl into the bargain.

Leon. But, sir, if you will but listen to reason——

480 *Cro.* Come, then, produce your reasons. I tell you, I'm fixed, determined ; so now produce your reasons. When I'm determined, I always listen to reason, because it can then do no harm.

Leon. You have alleged that a mutual choice was the first requisite in matrimonial happiness.

Cro. Well, and you have both of you a mutual choice. She has her choice—to marry you, or lose half her for-

tune ; and you have your choice—to marry her, or pack out of doors without any fortune at all.

Leon. An only son, sir, might expect more indulgence. 490

Cro. An only father, sir, might expect more obedience : besides, has not your sister here, that never disoblged me in her life, as good a right as you ? He's a sad dog, Livy, my dear, and would take all from you. But he shan't, I tell you he shan't, for you shall have your share.

Oliv. Dear sir, I wish you'd be convinced, that I can never be happy in any addition to my fortune which is taken from his.

Cro. Well, well, it's a good child, so say no more, 500 but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you : old Ruggins, the curry-comb maker, lying in state : I am told he makes a very handsome corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously. He was an intimate friend of mine, and these are friendly things we ought to do for each other. {*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE—CROAKER'S *House*

MISS RICHLAND and GARNET

Miss Rich. Olivia not his sister ? Olivia not Leone's sister ? You amaze me !

Gar. No more his sister than I am ; I had it all from his own servant : I can get anything from that quarter.

Miss Rich. But how ? Tell me again, Garnet.

Gar. Why, madam, as I told you before, instead of going to Lyons to bring home his sister, who has been there with her aunt these ten years, he never went further than Paris : there he saw and fell in love with
10 this young lady—by the bye, of a prodigious family.

Miss Rich. And brought her home to my guardian as his daughter ?

Gar. Yes, and daughter she will be. If he don't consent to their marriage, they talk of trying what a Scotch parson can do.

Miss Rich. Well, I own they have deceived me—And so demurely as Olivia carried it too !—Would you believe it, Garnet, I told her all my secrets ; and yet the sly cheat concealed all this from me ?

20 *Gar.* And, upon my word, madam, I don't much blame her : she was loth to trust one with her secrets, that was so very bad at keeping her own.

Miss Rich. But, to add to their deceit, the young gentleman, it seems, pretends to make me serious proposals. My guardian and he are to be here presently, to open the affair in form. You know I am to lose half my fortune if I refuse him.

Gar. Yet, what can you do ? For being, as you are, in love with Mr. Honeywood, madam——

Miss Rich. How ! idiot, what do you mean ? In love 30 with Mr. Honeywood ! Is this to provoke me ?

Gar. That is, madam, in friendship with him ; I meant nothing more than friendship, as I hope to be married ; nothing more.

Miss Rich. Well, no more of this. As to my guardian and his son, they shall find me prepared to receive them : I'm resolved to accept their proposal with seeming pleasure, to mortify them by compliance, and so throw the refusal at last upon them.

Gar. Delicious ! and that will secure your whole fortune to yourself. Well, who could have thought so innocent a face could cover so much 'cuteness !

Miss Rich. Why, girl, I only oppose my prudence to their cunning, and practise a lesson they have taught me against themselves.

Gar. Then you're likely not long to want employment, for here they come, and in close conference.

Enter CROAKER and LEONTINE

Leon. Excuse me, sir, if I seem to hesitate upon the point of putting to the lady so important a question.

Cro. Lord ! good sir, moderate your fears ; you're so 50 plaguey shy, that one would think you had changed sexes. I tell you we must have the half or the whole. Come, let

me see with what spirit you begin. Well, why don't you? Eh! what? Well, then—I must, it seems—Miss Richland, my dear, I believe you guess at our business; an affair which my son here comes to open, that nearly concerns your happiness.

Miss Rich. Sir, I should be ungrateful not to be pleased with anything that comes recommended by you.

60 *Cro.* How, boy, could you desire a finer opening? Why don't you begin, I say? [To LEONTINE.

Leon. 'Tis true, madam, my father, madam, has some intentions—hem—of explaining an affair—which—himself—can best explain, madam.

Cro. Yes, my dear; it comes entirely from my son; it's all a request of his own, madam. And I will permit him to make the best of it.

Leon. The whole affair is only this, madam; my father has a proposal to make, which he insists none but
70 himself shall deliver.

Cro. My mind misgives me, the fellow will never be brought on (*aside*). In short, madam, you see before you one that loves you, one whose whole happiness is all in you.

Miss Rich. I never had any doubts of your regard, sir; and I hope you can have none of my duty.

Cro. That's not the thing, my little sweeting; my love! No, no, another-guess lover than I: there he stands, madam, his very looks declare the force of his
80 passion—Call up a look, you dog! (*aside*)—But then, had you seen him, as I have, weeping, speaking soliloquies and blank verse, sometimes melancholy, and sometimes absent.

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, he's absent now; or such a

declaration would have come most properly from himself.

Cro. Himself, madam ! he would die before he could make such a confession ; and if he had not a channel for his passion through me, it would ere now have drowned his understanding. 90

Miss Rich. I must grant, sir, there are attractions in modest diffidence above the force of words. A silent address is the genuine eloquence of sincerity.

Cro. Madam, he has forgot to speak any other language ; silence is become his mother-tongue.

Miss Rich. And it must be confessed, sir, it speaks very powerfully in his favour. And yet I shall be thought too forward in making such a confession ; shan't I, Mr. Leontine ?

Leon. Confusion ! my reserve will undo me. But, 100 if modesty attracts her, impudence may disgust her. I'll try. (*Aside.*) Don't imagine from my silence, madam, that I want a due sense of the honour and happiness intended me. My father, madam, tells me, your humble servant is not totally indifferent to you—he admires you : I adore you ; and when we come together, upon my soul I believe we shall be the happiest couple in all St. James's.

Miss Rich. If I could flatter myself you thought as you speak, sir—— 110

Leon. Doubt my sincerity, madam ? By your dear self I swear. Ask the brave if they desire glory ? ask cowards if they covet safety——

Cro. Well, well, no more questions about it.

Leon. Ask the sick if they long for health ? ask misers if they love money ? ask——

Cro. Ask a fool if he can talk nonsense ! What's come over the boy ? What signifies asking, when there's not a soul to give you an answer ? If you would ask the
120 purpose, ask this lady's consent to make you happy.

Miss Rich. Why indeed, sir, his uncommon ardour almost compels me—forces me to comply. And yet I'm afraid he'll despise a conquest gained with too much ease ; won't you, Mr. Leontine ?

Leon. Confusion ! (*aside.*) Oh, by no means, madam, by no means. And yet, madam, you talked of force. There is nothing I would avoid so much as compulsion in a thing of this kind. No, madam, I will still be generous, and leave you at liberty to refuse.

130 Cro. But I tell you, sir, the lady is not at liberty. It's a match. You see she says nothing. Silence gives consent.

Leon. But, sir, she talked of force. Consider, sir, the cruelty of constraining her inclinations.

Cro. But I say there's no cruelty. Don't you know, blockhead, that girls have always a roundabout way of saying yes before company ? So get you both gone together into the next room, and hang him that interrupts the tender explanation. Get you gone, I say ; I'll not hear a word.

140 Leon. But, sir, I must beg leave to insist——

Cro. Get off, you puppy, or I'll beg leave to insist upon knocking you down. Stupid whelp ! But I don't wonder : the boy takes entirely after his mother.

[*Exeunt* MISS RICH. and LEON.]

Enter MRS. CROAKER

Mrs. Cro. Mr. Croaker, I bring you something, my dear, that I believe will make you smile.

Cro. I'll hold you a guinea of that, my dear.

Mrs. Cro. A letter ; and, as I knew the hand, I ventured to open it.

Cro. And how can you expect your breaking open my letters should give me pleasure ? 150

Mrs. Cro. Poo ! it's from your sister at Lyons, and contains good news ; read it.

Cro. What a Frenchified cover is here ! That sister of mine has some good qualities, but I could never teach her to fold a letter.

Mrs. Cro. Fold a fiddlestick ! Read what it contains.

CROAKER, reading

" *Dear Nick*,—An English gentleman, of large fortune, has for some time made private, though honourable proposals to your daughter Olivia. They love each other tenderly, and I find she has consented, without letting 160 any of the family know, to crown his addresses. As such good offers don't come every day, your own good sense, his large fortune, and family considerations, will induce you to forgive her.

" Yours ever,

" RACHAEL CROAKER."

My daughter Olivia privately contracted to a man of large fortune ! This is good news, indeed. My heart never foretold me of this. And yet, how sily the little baggage has carried it since she came home ; not a word 170 on't to the old ones for the world. Yet I thought I saw something she wanted to conceal.

Mrs. Cro. Well, if they have concealed their amour, they shan't conceal their wedding ; that shall be public, I'm resolved.

Cro. I tell thee, woman, the wedding is the most foolish part of the ceremony. I can never get this woman to think of the most serious part of the nuptial engagement.

180 *Mrs. Cro.* What would you have me think of, their funeral? But come, tell me, my dear, don't you owe more to me than you care to confess? Would you have ever been known to Mr. Lofty, who has undertaken Miss Richland's claim at the Treasury, but for me? Who was it first made him an acquaintance at Lady Shabbaroon's rout? Who got him to promise us his interest? Is not he a backstairs favourite, one that can do what he pleases with those that do what they please? Is not he an acquaintance that all your groaning and
190 lamentation could never have got us?

Cro. He is a man of importance, I grant you. And yet what amazes me is, that, while he is giving away places to all the world, he can't get one for himself.

Mrs. Cro. That perhaps may be owing to his nicety. Great men are not easily satisfied.

Enter FRENCH SERVANT

Ser. An express from Monsieur Lofty. He vil be vait upon your honours instammant. He be only giving four five instruction, read two three memorial, call upon von ambassadeur. He vil be vid you in one
200 tree minutes.

Mrs. Cro. You see now, my dear. What an extensive department! Well, friend, let your master know, that we are extremely honoured by this honour. Was there anything ever in a higher style of breeding? All messages among the great are now done by express.

Cro. To be sure, no man does little things with more solemnity, or claims more respect than he. But he's in the right on't. In our bad world, respect is given where respect is claimed.

Mrs. Cro. Never mind the world, my dear : you were 210 never in a pleasanter place in your life. Let us now think of receiving him with proper respect—(*A loud rapping at the door*),—and there he is, by the thundering rap.

Cro. Ay, verily, there he is ! as close upon the heels of his own express, as an endorsement upon the back of a bill. Well, I'll leave you to receive him, whilst I go to chide my little Olivia for intending to steal a marriage without mine or her aunt's consent. I must seem to be angry, or she too may begin to despise my authority.

[*Exit.*

Enter LOFTY, speaking to his SERVANT

Lof. “ And if the Venetian ambassador, or that teasing creature the Marquis, should call, I'm not at home. 220 Dam'me, I'll be pack-horse to none of them.”—My dear madam, I have just snatched a moment.—“ And if the expresses to his grace be ready, let them be sent off ; they're of importance.”—Madam, I ask a thousand pardons.

Mrs. Cro. Sir, this honour—

Lof. “ And, Dubardieu ! if the person calls about the commission, let him know that it is made out. As for Lord Cumbercourt's stale request, it can keep cold : you 230 understand me.”—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

Mrs. Cro. Sir, this honour—

Lof. “ And, Dubardieu ! if the man comes from the Cornish borough, you must do him ; you must do him, I say.”—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.—“ And if

the Russian ambassador calls ; but he will scarce call to-day, I believe."—And now, madam, I have just got time to express my happiness in having the honour of being permitted to profess myself your most obedient,
240 humble servant.

Mrs. Cro. Sir, the happiness and honour are all mine : and yet, I'm only robbing the public while I detain you. ✓

Lof. Sink the public, madam, when the fair are to be attended. Ah, could all my hours be so charmingly devoted ! Sincerely, don't you pity us poor creatures in affairs ? Thus it is eternally ; solicited for places here, teased for pensions there, and courted everywhere. I know you pity me. Yes, I see you do.

Mrs. Cro. Excuse me, sir. "Toils of empires pleasures are," as Waller says.

Lof. Waller, Waller, is he of the house ?

Mrs. Cro. The modern poet of that name, sir.

Lof. Oh, a modern ! We men of business despise the moderns ; and as for the ancients, we have no time to read them. Poetry is a pretty thing enough for our wives and daughters ; but not for us. Why now, here I stand that know nothing of books. I say, madam, I know nothing of books ; and yet, I believe, upon a land-carriage fishery, a stamp act, or a jag-hire, I can talk my
260 two hours without feeling the want of them.

Mrs. Cro. The world is no stranger to Mr. Lofty's eminence in every capacity.

Lof. I vow to God, madam, you make me blush. I'm nothing, nothing, nothing in the world ; a mere obscure gentleman. To be sure, indeed, one or two of the present ministers are pleased to represent me as a formidable man. I know they are pleased to bespatter me at all

their little dirty levees. Yet, upon my soul, I wonder what they see in me to treat me so ! Measures, not men, have always been my mark ; and I vow, by all that's 270 honourable, my resentment has never done the men, as mere men, any manner of harm—that is, as mere men.

Mrs. Cro. What importance, and yet what modesty !

Lof. Oh, if you talk of modesty, madam, there, I own, I'm accessible to praise : modesty is my foible : it was so the Duke of Brentford used to say of me. " I love Jack Lofty," he used to say : " no man has a finer knowledge of things ; quite a man of information ; and when he speaks upon his legs, by the Lord he's prodigious, he scouts them ; and yet all men have their faults ; too 280 much modesty is his," says his grace.

Mrs. Cro. And yet, I dare say, you don't want assurance when you come to solicit for your friends.

Lof. Oh, there indeed I'm in bronze. Apropos ! I have just been mentioning Miss Richland's case to a certain personage ; we must name no names. When I ask, I am not to be put off, madam. No, no, I take my friend by the button. A fine girl, sir ; great justice in her case. A friend of mine—borough interest—business must be done, Mr. Secretary.—I say, Mr. Secretary, 290 her business must be done, sir. That's my way, madam.

Mrs. Cro. Bless me ! you said all this to the Secretary of State, did you ?

Lof. I did not say the Secretary, did I ? Well, curse it, since you have found me out, I will not deny it. It was to the Secretary.

Mrs. Cro. This was going to the fountain-head at once, not applying to the understrappers, as Mr. Honeywood would have had us.

300 *Lof.* Honeywood ! he ! he ! He was, indeed, a fine solicitor. I suppose you have heard what has just happened to him ?

Mrs. Cro. Poor dear man ! no accident, I hope ?

Lof. Undone, madam, that's all. His creditors have taken him into custody. A prisoner in his own house.

Mrs. Cro. A prisoner in his own house ? How ! At this very time ? I'm quite unhappy for him.

Lof. Why, so am I. The man, to be sure, was immensely good-natured. But then I could never find
310 that he had anything in him.

Mrs. Cro. His manner, to be sure, was excessively harmless ; some, indeed, thought it a little dull. For my part, I always concealed my opinion.

Lof. It can't be concealed, madam ; the man was dull, dull as the last new comedy ! a poor impracticable creature ! I tried once or twice to know if he was fit for business ; but he had scarce talents to be groom-porter to an orange-barrow.

Mrs. Cro. How differently does Miss Richland think
320 of him ! for, I believe, with all his faults, she loves him.

Lof. Loves him ! Does she ? You should cure her of that by all means. Let me see ; what if she were sent to him this instant, in his present doleful situation ? My life for it, that works her cure. Distress is a perfect antidote to love. Suppose we join her in the next room ? Miss Richland is a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and must not be thrown away. Upon my honour, madam, I have a regard for Miss Richland ; and rather
330 than she should be thrown away, I should think it no indignity to marry her myself. [Exeunt.

Enter OLIVIA and LEONTINE

Leon. And yet, trust me, Olivia, I had every reason to expect Miss Richland's refusal, as I did everything in my power to deserve it. Her indelicacy surprises me.

Oliv. Sure, Leontine, there's nothing so indelicate in being sensible of your merit. If so, I fear I shall be the most guilty thing alive.

Leon. But you mistake, my dear. The same attention I used to advance my merit with you, I practised to lessen it with her. What more could I do ? 340

Oliv. Let us now rather consider what is to be done. We have both dissembled too long.—I have always been ashamed—I am now quite weary of it. Sure I could never have undergone so much for any other but you.

Leon. And you shall find my gratitude equal to your kindest compliance. Though our friends should totally forsake us, Olivia, we can draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.

Oliv. Then why should we defer our scheme of humble happiness, when it is now in our power ? I may be the 350 favourite of your father, it is true ; but can it ever be thought, that his present kindness to a supposed child will continue to a known deceiver ?

Leon. I have many reasons to believe it will. As his attachments are but few, they are lasting. His own marriage was a private one, as ours may be. Besides, I have sounded him already at a distance, and find all his answers exactly to our wish. Nay, by an expression or two that dropped from him, I am induced to think he knows of this affair. 360

Oliv. Indeed ! But that would be a happiness too great to be expected.

Leon. However it be, I'm certain you have power over him ; and I am persuaded, if you informed him of our situation, that he would be disposed to pardon it.

Oliv. You had equal expectations, Leontine, from your last scheme with Miss Richland, which you find has succeeded most wretchedly.

Leon. And that's the best reason for trying another.

370 *Oliv.* If it must be so, I submit.

Leon. As we could wish, he comes this way. Now, my dearest Olivia, be resolute. I'll just retire within hearing, to come in at a proper time, either to share your danger, or confirm your victory. *[Exit.*

Enter CROAKER

Cro. Yes, I must forgive her ; and yet not too easily, neither. It will be proper to keep up the decorums of resentment a little, if it be only to impress her with an idea of my authority.

Oliv. How I tremble to approach him !—Might I presume, sir,—if I interrupt you——

Cro. No, child, where I have an affection, it is not a little thing that can interrupt me. Affection gets over little things.

Oliv. Sir, you're too kind. I'm sensible how ill I deserve this partiality. Yet, Heaven knows, there is nothing I would not do to gain it.

Cro. And you have but too well succeeded, you little hussy, you ! With those endearing ways of yours, on my conscience, I could be brought to forgive anything, 390 unless it were a very great offence indeed.

Oliv. But mine is such an offence—When you know

my guilt—Yes, you shall know it, though I feel the greatest pain in the confession.

Cro. Why, then, if it be so very great a pain, you may spare yourself the trouble ; for I know every syllable of the matter before you begin.

Oliv. Indeed ! then I'm undone.

Cro. Ay, miss, you wanted to steal a match, without letting me know it, did you ? But I'm not worth being consulted, I suppose, when there's to be a marriage in my own family. No, I'm nobody. I'm to be a mere article of family lumber ; a piece of cracked china to be stuck up in a corner.

Oliv. Dear sir, nothing but the dread of your authority could induce us to conceal it from you.

Cro. No, no, my consequence is no more ; I'm as little minded as a dead Russian in winter, just stuck up with a pipe in its mouth till there comes a thaw—It goes to my heart to vex her. [*Aside.*

Oliv. I was prepared, sir, for your anger, and despaired of pardon, even while I presumed to ask it. But your severity shall never abate my affection, as my punishment is but justice.

Cro. And yet you should not despair neither, Livy. We ought to hope all for the best.

Oliv. And do you permit me to hope, sir ? Can I ever expect to be forgiven ? But hope has too long deceived me.

Cro. Why then, child, it shan't deceive you now, for I forgive you this very moment ; I forgive you all ; and now you are indeed my daughter.

Oliv. O transport ! this kindness overpowers me.

Cro. I was always against severity to our children.

We have been young and giddy ourselves, and we can't expect boys and girls to be old before their time.

Oliv. What generosity ! but can you forget the many falsehoods, the dissimulation——

Cro. You did indeed dissemble, you urchin, you ; but where's the girl that won't dissemble for a husband ?
430 My wife and I had never been married, if we had not dissembled a little beforehand.

Oliv. It shall be my future care never to put such generosity to a second trial. And as for the partner of my offence and folly, from his native honour, and the just sense he has of his duty, I can answer for him that——

Enter LEONTINE

Leon. Permit him thus to answer for himself (*kneeling*). Thus, sir, let me speak my gratitude for this unmerited forgiveness. Yes, sir, this even exceeds all
440 your former tenderness. I now can boast the most indulgent of fathers. The life he gave, compared to this, was but a trifling blessing.

Cro. And, good sir, who sent for you, with that fine tragedy face, and flourishing manner ? I don't know what we have to do with your gratitude upon this occasion.

Leon. How, sir ! Is it possible to be silent, when so much obliged ? Would you refuse me the pleasure of being grateful ? of adding my thanks to my Olivia's ? of
450 sharing in the transports that you have thus occasioned ?

Cro. Lord, sir, we can be happy enough without your coming in to make up the party. I don't know what's the matter with the boy all this day ; he has got into such a rhodomontade manner all this morning !

Leon. But, sir, I that have so large a part in the benefit, is it not my duty to show my joy? Is the being admitted to your favour so slight an obligation? Is the happiness of marrying my Olivia so small a blessing?

Cro. Marrying Olivia! marrying Olivia! marrying his own sister! Sure the boy is out of his senses! His own sister!

Leon. My sister!

Oliv. Sister! How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*

Leon. Some cursed mistake in all this, I find! [*Aside.*

Cro. What does the booby mean? or has he any meaning? Eh, what do you mean, you blockhead, you?

Leon. Mean, sir—why, sir—only, when my sister is to be married, that I have the pleasure of marrying her, sir; that is, of giving her away, sir—I have made a point of it.

Cro. Oh, is that all? Give her away. You have made a point of it. Then you had as good make a point of first giving away yourself, as I'm going to prepare the writings between you and Miss Richland this very minute. What a fuss is here about nothing! Why, what's the matter now? I thought I had made you at least as happy as you could wish.

Oliv. Oh yes, sir; very happy.

Cro. Do you foresee anything, child? You look as if you did. I think if anything was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look-out as another; and yet I foresee nothing.

[*Exit.*

Oliv. What can it mean?

Leon. He knows something, and yet for my life I can't tell what.

Oliv. It can't be the connection between us, I'm pretty certain.

Leon. Whatever it be, my dearest, I am resolved to
490 put it out of fortune's power to repeat our mortification.
I'll haste and prepare for our journey to Scotland this
very evening. My friend Honeywood has promised me
his advice and assistance. I'll go to him, and repose our
distresses on his friendly bosom ; and I know so much
of his honest heart, that if he can't relieve our uneasiness,
he will at least share them. *[Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD

SCENE—*Young HONEYWOOD's House*

BAILIFF, HONEYWOOD, FOLLOWER

Bail. Look ye, sir, I have arrested as good men as you in my time : no disparagement of you neither : men that would go forty guineas on a game of cribbage. I challenge the town to show a man in more genteeler practice than myself.

Hon. Without all question, Mr. — I forget your name, sir.

Bail. How can you forget what you never knew ?
He ! he ! he !

Hon. May I beg leave to ask your name ? 10

Bail. Yes, you may.

Hon. Then, pray, sir, what is your name ?

Bail. That I didn't promise to tell you. He ! he !
he ! A joke breaks no bones, as we say among us that practise the law.

Hon. You may have reason for keeping it a secret, perhaps ?

Bail. The law does nothing without reason. I'm ashamed to tell my name to no man, sir. If you can show cause, as why, upon a special capus, that I should 20
prove my name—But, come, Timothy Twitch is my

name. And, now you know my name, what have you to say to that ?

Hon. Nothing in the world, good Mr. Twitch, but that I have a favour to ask, that's all.

Bail. Ay, favours are more easily asked than granted, as we say among us that practise the law. I have taken an oath against granting favours. Would you have me perjure myself ?

30 *Hon.* But my request will come recommended in so strong a manner, as, I believe, you'll have no scruple (*pulling out his purse*). The thing is only this. I believe I shall be able to discharge this trifle in two or three days at farthest ; but as I would not have the affair known for the world, I have thoughts of keeping you, and your good friend here, about me till the debt is discharged : for which I shall be properly grateful.

Bail. Oh ! that's another maxum, and altogether within my oath. For certain, if an honest man is to get
40 anything by a thing, there's no reason why all things should not be done in civility.

Hon. Doubtless, all trades must live, Mr. Twitch ; and yours is a necessary one. (*Gives him money.*)

Bail. Oh ! your honour ; I hope your honour takes nothing amiss as I does, as I does nothing but my duty in so doing. I'm sure no man can say I ever give a gentleman, that was a gentleman, ill usage. If I saw that a gentleman was a gentleman, I have taken money not to see him for ten weeks together.

50 *Hon.* Tenderness is a virtue, Mr. Twitch.

Bail. Ay, sir, it's a perfect treasure. I love to see a gentleman with a tender heart. I don't know, but I think I have a tender heart myself. If all that I have

lost by my heart was put together, it would make a—but no matter for that.

Hon. Don't account it lost, Mr. Twitch. The ingratitude of the world can never deprive us of the conscious happiness of having acted with humanity ourselves.

Bail. Humanity, sir, is a jewel. It's better than gold. 60 I love humanity. People may say that we in our way have no humanity; but I'll show you my humanity this moment. There's my follower here, little Flanigan, with a wife and four children; a guinea or two would be more to him than twice as much to another. Now, as I can't show him any humanity myself, I must beg leave you'll do it for me.

Hon. I assure you, Mr. Twitch, yours is a most powerful recommendation. (*Giving money to the FOLLOWER.*)

Bail. Sir, you're a gentleman. I see you know what 70 to do with your money. But to business: we are to be with you here as your friends, I suppose. But set in case company comes.—Little Flanigan here, to be sure, has a good face; a very good face; but then, he is a little seedy, as we say among us that practise the law. Not well in clothes. Smoke the pocket-holes.

Hon. Well, that shall be remedied without delay.

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Sir, Miss Richland is below.

Hon. How unlucky! Detain her a moment. We must improve my good friend little Mr. Flanigan's appearance first. Here, let Mr. Flanigan have a suit of my clothes—quick—the brown and silver—Do you hear?

Ser. That your honour gave away to the begging

gentleman that makes verses, because it was as good as new.

Hon. The white and gold, then.

Ser. That, your honour, I made bold to sell, because it was good for nothing.

Hon. Well, the first that comes to hand, then. The
90 blue and gold. I believe Mr. Flanigan will look best in blue.

[*Exit FLANIGAN.*]

Bail. Rabbit me, but little Flanigan will look well in anything. Ah, if your honour knew that bit of flesh as well as I do, you'd be perfectly in love with him. There's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy-cock than he : scents like a hound ; sticks like a weasel. He was master of the ceremonies to the black Queen of Morocco, when I took him to follow me. (*Re-enter FLANIGAN.*) Heh, ecod, I think he looks so well, that I
100 don't care if I have a suit from the same place myself.

Hon. Well, well, I hear the lady coming. Dear Mr. Twitch, I beg you'll give your friend directions not to speak. As for yourself, I know you will say nothing without being directed.

Bail. Never you fear me ; I'll show the lady that I have something to say for myself as well as another. One man has one way of talking, and another man has another, that's all the difference between them.

Enter MISS RICHLAND and her MAID

Miss Rich. You'll be surprised, sir, with this visit.
110 But you know I'm yet to thank you for choosing my little library.

Hon. Thanks, madam, are unnecessary ; as it was I that was obliged by your commands. Chairs here. Two

of my very good friends, Mr. Twitch and Mr. Flanigan. Pray, gentlemen, sit without ceremony.

Miss Rich. Who can these odd-looking men be ! I fear it is as I was informed. It must be so. [*Aside.*

Bail. (*after a pause*). Pretty weather ; very pretty weather for the time of year, madam.

Fol. Very good circuit weather in the country. 120

Hon. You officers are generally favourites among the ladies. My friends, madam, have been upon very disagreeable duty, I assure you. The fair should, in some measure, recompense the toils of the brave.

Miss Rich. Our officers do indeed deserve every favour. The gentlemen are in the marine service, I presume, sir.

Hon. Why, madam, they do—occasionally serve in the fleet, madam. A dangerous service !

Miss Rich. I'm told so. And I own it has often surprised me, that while we have had so many instances of bravery there, we have had so few of wit at home to praise it. 130

Hon. I grant, madam, that our poets have not written as our soldiers have fought ; but they have done all they could, and Hawke or Amherst could do no more.

Miss Rich. I am quite displeased when I see a fine subject spoiled by a dull writer.

Hon. We should not be so severe against dull writers, madam. It is ten to one that the dullest writer exceeds 140 the most rigid French critic who presumes to despise him.

Fol. Damn the French, the *parle-vous*, and all that belongs to them !

Miss Rich. Sir !

Hon. Ha ! ha ! ha ! honest Mr. Flanigan. A true English officer, madam ; he's not contented with beating the French, but he will scold them too.

Miss Rich. Yet, Mr. Honeywood, this does not convince me but that severity in criticism is necessary. It was our first adopting the severity of French taste, that has brought them in turn to taste us.

Bail. Taste us ! By the Lord, madam, they devour us. Give monseers but a taste, and I'll be damned but they come in for a bellyful.

Miss Rich. Very extraordinary this !

Fol. But very true. What makes the bread rising ? the *parle-vous* that devour us. What makes the mutton fivepence a pound ? the *parle-vous* that eat it up. What makes the beer threepence-halfpenny a pot ?——

Hon. Ah ! the vulgar rogues ; all will be out. (*Aside.*) Right, gentlemen, very right, upon my word, and quite to the purpose. They draw a parallel, madam, between the mental taste and that of our senses. We are injured as much by the French severity in the one, as by French rapacity in the other. That's their meaning.

Miss Rich. Though I don't see the force of the parallel, yet I'll own that we should sometimes pardon books, as we do our friends, that have now and then agreeable absurdities to recommend them.

Bail. That's all my eye. The king only can pardon, as the law says : for. set in case——

Hon. I'm quite of your opinion, sir. I see the whole drift of your argument. Yes, certainly, our presuming to pardon any work is arrogating a power that belongs to another. If all have power to condemn, what writer can be free ?

Bail. By his habus corpus. His habus corpus can set him free at any time : for, set in case——

Hon. I'm obliged to you, sir, for the hint. If, madam, 180 as my friend observes, our laws are so careful of a gentleman's person, sure we ought to be equally careful of his dearer part, his fame.

Fol. Ay, but if so be a man's nabbed, you know——

Hon. Mr. Flanigan, if you spoke for ever, you could not improve the last observation. For my own part, I think it conclusive.

Bail. As for the matter of that, mayhap——

Hon. Nay, sir, give me leave in this instance to be positive. For where is the necessity of censuring works 190 without genius, which must shortly sink of themselves ? what is it, but aiming an unnecessary blow against a victim already under the hands of justice ?

Bail. Justice ! Oh, by the elevens, if you talk about justice, I think I am at home there : for, in a course of law——

Hon. My dear Mr. Twitch, I discern what you'd be at, perfectly ; and I believe the lady must be sensible of the art with which it is introduced. I suppose you perceive the meaning, madam, of his course of law. 200

Miss Rich. I protest, sir, I do not. I perceive only that you answer one gentleman before he has finished, and the other before he has well begun.

Bail. Madam, you are a gentlewoman, and I will make the matter out. This here question is about severity, and justice, and pardon, and the like of they. Now, to explain the thing——

Hon. Oh ! curse your explanations. [Aside.

Enter SERVANT

Ser. Mr. Leontine, sir, below, desires to speak with
210 you upon earnest business.

Hon. That's lucky. (*Aside.*) Dear madam, you'll excuse me and my good friends here, for a few minutes. There are books, madam, to amuse you. Come, gentlemen, you know I make no ceremony with such friends. After you, sir. Excuse me. Well, if I must. But I know your natural politeness.

Bail. Before and behind, you know.

Fol. Ay, ay, before and behind, before and behind.

[*Exeunt HONEYWOOD, BAILIFF, and FOLLOWER.*]

Miss Rich. What can all this mean, Garnet?

220 *Gar.* Mean, madam! why, what should it mean, but what Mr. Lofty sent you here to see? These people he calls officers are officers sure enough; sheriff's officers; bailiffs, madam.

Miss Rich. Ay, it is certainly so. Well, though his perplexities are far from giving me pleasure, yet I own there is something very ridiculous in them, and a just punishment for his dissimulation.

Gar. And so they are. But I wonder, madam, that the lawyer you just employed to pay his debts, and set
230 him free, has not done it by this time. He ought at least to have been here before now. But lawyers are always more ready to get a man into troubles than out of them.

Enter SIR WILLIAM HONEYWOOD

Sir Wil. For Miss Richland to undertake setting him free, I own, was quite unexpected. It has totally unhinged my schemes to reclaim him. Yet it gives me pleasure to find that, among a number of worthless

friendships, he has made one acquisition of real value ; for there must be some softer passion on her side that prompts this generosity. Ha ! here before me : I'll endeavour to sound her affections.—Madam, as I am the 240 person that have had some demands upon the gentleman of this house, I hope you'll excuse me, if before I enlarged him, I wanted to see yourself.

Miss Rich. The precaution was very unnecessary, sir. I suppose your wants were only such as my agent had power to satisfy.

Sir Wil. Partly, madam. But I was also willing you should be fully apprised of the character of the gentleman you intend to serve.

Miss Rich. It must come, sir, with a very ill grace from 250 you. To censure it after what you have done, would look like malice ; and to speak favourably of a character you have oppressed, would be impeaching your own. And sure, his tenderness, his humanity, his universal friendship, may atone for many faults.

Sir Wil. That friendship, madam, which is exerted in too wide a sphere, becomes totally useless. Our bounty, like a drop of water, disappears when diffused too widely. They who pretend most to this universal benevolence, are either deceivers or dupes : men who 260 desire to cover their private ill-nature by a pretended regard for all ; or men who, reasoning themselves into false feelings, are more earnest in pursuit of splendid, than of useful virtues.

Miss Rich. I am surprised, sir, to hear one, who has probably been a gainer by the folly of others, so severe in his censure of it.

Sir Wil. Whatever I may have gained by folly,

madam, you see I am willing to prevent your losing
270 by it.

Miss Rich. Your cares for me, sir, are unnecessary. I always suspect those services which are denied where they are wanted, and offered, perhaps, in hopes of a refusal. No, sir, my directions have been given, and I insist upon their being complied with.

Sir Wil. Thou amiable woman! I can no longer contain the expressions of my gratitude, my pleasure. You see before you one who has been equally careful of his interest; one, who has for some time been a con-
280 cealed spectator of his follies, and only punished in hopes to reclaim him—his uncle!

Miss Rich. Sir William Honeywood! You amaze me. How shall I conceal my confusion? I fear, sir, you'll think I have been too forward in my services. I confess I—

Sir Wil. Don't make any apologies, madam. I only find myself unable to repay the obligation. And yet, I have been trying my interest of late to serve you. Having learnt, madam, that you had some demands upon Govern-
290 ment, I have, though unasked, been your solicitor there.

Miss Rich. Sir, I'm infinitely obliged to your intentions. But my guardian has employed another gentleman, who assures him of success.

Sir Wil. Who? The important little man that visits here? Trust me, madam, he's quite contemptible among men in power, and utterly unable to serve you. Mr. Lofty's promises are much better known to people of fashion, than his person, I assure you.

Miss Rich. How have we been deceived! As sure as
300 can be, here he comes.

Sir Wil. Does he ? Remember I'm to continue unknown. My return to England has not yet been made public. With what impudence he enters !

Enter LOFTY

Lof. Let the chariot—let my chariot drive off ; I'll visit to his grace's in a chair. Miss Richland here before me ! Punctual, as usual, to the calls of humanity. I'm very sorry, madam, things of this kind should happen, especially to a man I have shown everywhere, and carried amongst us as a particular acquaintance.

Miss Rich. I find, sir, you have the art of making the 310 misfortunes of others your own.

Lof. My dear madam, what can a private man like me do ? One man can't do everything ; and then, I do so much in this way every day. Let me see ; something considerable might be done for him by subscription ; it could not fail if I carried the list. I'll undertake to set down a brace of dukes, two dozen lords, and half the lower house, at my own peril.

Sir Wil. And, after all, it's more than probable, sir, he might reject the offer of such powerful patronage. 320

Lof. Then, madam, what can we do ? You know I never make promises. In truth, I once or twice tried to do something with him in the way of business ; but, as I often told his uncle, Sir William Honeywood, the man was utterly impracticable.

Sir Wil. His uncle ! then that gentleman, I suppose, is a particular friend of yours.

Lof. Meaning me, sir ?—Yes, madam, as I often said, my dear Sir William, you are sensible I would do anything, as far as my poor interest goes, to serve your 330

family : but what can be done ? there's no procuring first-rate places for ninth-rate abilities.

Miss Rich. I've heard of Sir William Honeywood ; he's abroad in employment : he confided in your judgment, I suppose.

Lof. Why, yes, madam, I believe Sir William had some reason to confide in my judgment ; one little reason, perhaps.

Miss Rich. Pray, sir, what was it ?

340 *Lof.* Why, madam—but let it go no further—it was I procured him his place.

Sir Wil. Did you, sir ?

Lof. Either you or I, sir.

Miss Rich. This, Mr. Lofty, was very kind indeed.

Lof. I did love him, to be sure ; he had some amusing qualities ; no man was fitter to be a toast-master to a club, or had a better head.

Miss Rich. A better head ?

Lof. Ay, at a bottle. To be sure, he was as dull as a
350 choice spirit ; but, hang it, he was grateful, very grateful ; and gratitude hides a multitude of faults.

Sir Wil. He might have reason, perhaps. His place is pretty considerable, I'm told.

Lof. A trifle, a mere trifle among us men of business. The truth is, he wanted dignity to fill up a greater.

Sir Wil. Dignity of person, do you mean, sir ? I'm told he's much about my size and figure, sir.

Lof. Ay, tall enough for a marching regiment ; but then he wanted a something—a consequence of form—
360 a kind of—I believe the lady perceives my meaning.

Miss Rich. Oh, perfectly ; you courtiers can do anything, I see.

Lof. My dear madam, all this is but a mere exchange ; we do greater things for one another every day. Why, as thus, now : let me suppose you the First Lord of the Treasury ; you have an employment in you that I want ; I have a place in me that you want : do me here, do you there : interest of both sides, few words, flat, done and done, and it's over.

Sir Wil. A thought strikes me. (*Aside.*) Now you 370 mention Sir William Honeywood, madam ; and as he seems, sir, an acquaintance of yours, you'll be glad to hear he's arrived from Italy. I had it from a friend who knows him as well as he does me, and you may depend on my information.

Lof. The devil he is ! If I had known that, we should not have been quite so well acquainted. [*Aside.*

Sir Wil. He is certainly returned ; and, as this gentleman is a friend of yours, he can be of signal service to us, by introducing me to him : there are some papers relative 380 to your affairs, that require dispatch and his inspection.

Miss Rich. This gentleman, Mr. Lofty, is a person employed in my affairs : I know you'll serve us.

Lof. My dear madam, I live but to serve you. Sir William shall even wait upon him, if you think proper to command it.

Sir Wil. That will be quite unnecessary.

Lof. Well, we must introduce you, then. Call upon me—let me see—ay, in two days.

Sir Wil. Now, or the opportunity will be lost for ever. 390

Lof. Well, if it must be now, now let it be. But damn it, that's unfortunate ; my Lord Grig's cursed Pensacola business comes on this very hour, and I'm engaged to attend—another time——

Sir Wil. A short letter to Sir William will do.

Lof. You shall have it ; yet, in my opinion, a letter is a very bad way of going to work ; face to face, that's my way.

Sir Wil. The letter, sir, will do quite as well.

400 *Lof.* Zounds, sir, do you pretend to direct me in the business of office ? Do you know me, sir ? Who am I ?

Miss Rich. Dear Mr. Lofty, this request is not so much his as mine ; if my commands—but you despise my power.

Lof. Delicate creature ! your commands could even control a debate at midnight : to a power so constitutional, I am all obedience and tranquillity. He shall have a letter : where is my secretary ? Dubardieu !
410 And yet, I protest, I don't like this way of doing business. I think if I spoke first to Sir William—but you will have it so. *[Exit with MISS RICHLAND.]*

Sir Wil. (Alone). Ha ! ha ! ha !—This, too, is one of my nephew's hopeful associates. O vanity, thou constant deceiver, how do all thy efforts to exalt, serve but to sink us ! Thy false colourings, like those employed to heighten beauty, only seem to mend that bloom which they contribute to destroy. I'm not displeased at this interview : exposing this fellow's impudence to the con-
420 tempt it deserves, may be of use to my design ; at least, if he can reflect, it will be of use to himself.

Enter JARVIS

Sir Wil. How now, Jarvis, where's your master, my nephew ?

Jar. At his wit's ends, I believe : he's scarce gotten

out of one scrape, but he's running his head into another.

Sir Wil. How so ?

Jar. The house has but just been cleared of the bailiffs, and now he's again engaging, tooth and nail, in assisting old Croaker's son to patch up a clandestine 430 match with the young lady that passes in the house for his sister.

Sir Wil. Ever busy to serve others.

Jar. Ay, anybody but himself. The young couple, it seems, are just setting out for Scotland ; and he supplies them with money for the journey.

Sir Wil. Money ! how is he able to supply others, who has scarce any for himself ?

Jar. Why, there it is : he has no money, that's true ; but then, as he never said *No* to any request in his life, 440 he has given them a bill, drawn by a friend of his upon a merchant in the city, which I am to get changed ; for you must know that I am to go with them to Scotland myself.

Sir Wil. How ?

Jar. It seems the young gentleman is obliged to take a different road from his mistress, as he is to call upon an uncle of his that lives out of the way, in order to prepare a place for their reception, when they return ; so they have borrowed me from my master, as the properest 450 person to attend the young lady down.

Sir Wil. To the land of matrimony ! A pleasant journey, Jarvis.

Jar. Ay, but I'm only to have all the fatigues on't.

Sir Wil. Well, it may be shorter, and less fatiguing, than you imagine. I know but too much of the young

lady's family and connections, whom I have seen abroad. I have also discovered that Miss Richland is not indifferent to my thoughtless nephew ; and will endeavour, 400 though I fear in vain, to establish that connection. But, come, the letter I wait for must be almost finished ; I'll let you further into my intentions, in the next room.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FOURTH

SCENE—CROAKER'S *House*

Lof. Well, sure the devil's in me of late, for running my head into such defiles, as nothing but a genius like my own could draw me from. I was formerly contented to husband out my places and pensions with some degree of frugality; but, curse it, of late I have given away the whole Court Register in less time than they could print the title-page: yet, hang it, why scruple a lie or two to come at a fine girl, when I every day tell a thousand for nothing. Ha! Honeywood here before me! Could Miss Richland have set him at liberty? 10

Enter HONEYWOOD

Mr. Honeywood, I'm glad to see you abroad again. I find my concurrence was not necessary in your unfortunate affairs. I had put things in a train to do your business; but it is not for me to say what I intended doing.

Hon. It was unfortunate indeed, sir. But what adds to my uneasiness is, that while you seem to be acquainted with my misfortune, I myself continue still a stranger to my benefactor.

Lof. How! not know the friend that served you?

Hon. Can't guess at the person. 20

Lof. Inquire.

Hon. I have; but all I can learn is, that he chooses

to remain concealed, and that all inquiry must be fruitless.

Lof. Must be fruitless !

Hon. Absolutely fruitless.

Lof. Sure of that ?

Hon. Very sure.

Lof. Then I'll be damned if you shall ever know it from
30 me.

Hon. How, sir !

Lof. I suppose now, Mr. Honeywood, you think my rent-roll very considerable, and that I have vast sums of money to throw away ; I know you do. The world, to be sure, says such things of me.

Hon. The world, by what I learn, is no stranger to your generosity. But where does this tend ?

Lof. To nothing ; nothing in the world. The town, to be sure, when it makes such a thing as me the subject
40 of conversation, has asserted, that I never yet patronised a man of merit.

Hon. I have heard instances to the contrary, even from yourself.

Lof. Yes, Honeywood ; and there are instances to the contrary, that you shall never hear from myself.

Hon. Ha ! dear sir, permit me to ask you but one question.

Lof. Sir, ask me no questions ; I say, sir, ask me no questions ; I'll be damned if I answer them.

50 *Hon.* I will ask no further. My friend ! my benefactor ! it is, it must be here, that I am indebted for freedom, for honour. Yes, thou worthiest of men, from the beginning I suspected it, but was afraid to return thanks ; which, if undeserved, might seem reproaches.

Lof. I protest I do not understand all this, Mr. Honeywood : you treat me very cavalierly. I do assure you, sir—Blood, sir, can't a man be permitted to enjoy the luxury of his own feelings without all this parade ?

Hon. Nay, do not attempt to conceal an action that adds to your honour. Your looks, your air, your manner, 60 all confess it.

Lof. Confess it, sir ! Torture itself, sir, shall never bring me to confess it. Mr. Honeywood, I have admitted you upon terms of friendship. Don't let us fall out ; make me happy, and let this be buried in oblivion. You know I hate ostentation ; you know I do. Come, come, Honeywood, you know I always loved to be a friend, and not a patron. I beg this may make no kind of distance between us. Come, come, you and I must be more familiar—indeed we must. 70

Hon. Heavens ! Can I ever repay such friendship ? Is there any way ?—Thou best of men, can I ever return the obligation ?

Lof. A bagatelle, a mere bagatelle ! But I see your heart is labouring to be grateful. You shall be grateful. It would be cruel to disappoint you.

Hon. How ! teach me the manner. Is there any way ?

Lof. From this moment you're mine. Yes, my friend, you shall know it—I'm in love.

Hon. And can I assist you ? 80

Lof. Nobody so well.

Hon. In what manner ? I'm all impatience.

Lof. You shall make love for me.

Hon. And to whom shall I speak in your favour ?

Lof. To a lady with whom you have great interest, I assure you : Miss Richland.

Hon. Miss Richland !

Lof. Yes, Miss Richland. She has struck the blow up to the hilt in my bosom, by Jupiter !

90 *Hon.* Heavens ! was ever anything more unfortunate ! It is too much to be endured.

Lof. Unfortunate, indeed ! And yet I can endure it, till you have opened the affair to her for me. Between ourselves, I think she likes me. I'm not apt to boast, but I think she does.

Hon. Indeed ! But, do you know the person you apply to ?

Lof. Yes, I know you are her friend and mine : that's enough. To you, therefore, I commit the success of my
100 passion. I'll say no more ; let friendship do the rest. I have only to add, that if at any time my little interest can be of service—but, hang it, I'll make no promises—you know my interest is yours at any time. No apologies, my friend, I'll not be answered ; it shall be so. [*Exit.*]

Hon. Open, generous, unsuspecting man ! He little thinks that I love her too ; and with such an ardent passion !—But then it was ever but a vain and hopeless one ; my torment, my persecution ! What shall I do ? Love, friendship ; a hopeless passion, a deserving
110 friend ! Love, that has been my tormentor ; a friend, that has, perhaps, distressed himself to serve me. It shall be so. Yes, I will discard the fondling hope from my bosom, and exert all my influence in his favour. And yet to see her in the possession of another !—Insupportable ! But then to betray a generous, trusting friend !—Worse, worse ! Yes, I'm resolved. Let me but be the instrument of their happiness, and then quit a country where I must for ever despair of finding my own. [*Exit.*]

Enter OLIVIA and GARNET, who carries a Milliner's Box

Oliv. Dear me, I wish this journey were over. No news of Jarvis yet? I believe the old peevish creature 120 delays purely to vex me.

Gar. Why, to be sure, madam, I did hear him say, a little snubbing before marriage would teach you to bear it the better afterwards.

Oliv. To be gone a full hour, though he had only to get a bill changed in the city! How provoking!

Gar. I'll lay my life, Mr. Leontine, that had twice as much to do, is setting off by this time from his inn; and here you are left behind.

Oliv. Well, let us be prepared for his coming, how- 130 ever. Are you sure you have omitted nothing, Garnet?

Gar. Not a stick, madam—all's here. Yet I wish you could take the white and silver to be married in. It's the worst luck in the world, in anything but white. I knew one Bett Stubbs, of our town, that was married in red; and, as sure as eggs is eggs, the bridegroom and she had a miff before morning.

Oliv. No matter. I'm all impatience till we are out of the house.

Gar. Bless me, madam, I had almost forgot the wed- 140 ding ring!—The sweet little thing—I don't think it would go on my little finger. And what if I put in a gentleman's night-cap, in case of necessity, madam? But here's Jarvis.

Enter JARVIS

Oliv. O Jarvis, are you come at last? We have been ready this half-hour. Now let's be going. Let us fly!

Jar. Ay, to Jericho ; for we shall have no going to Scotland this bout, I fancy.

Oliv. How ! what's the matter ?

150 *Jar.* Money, money, is the matter, madam. We have got no money. What the plague do you send me of your fool's errand for ? My master's bill upon the city is not worth a rush. Here it is ; Mrs. Garnet may pin up her hair with it.

Oliv. Undone ! How could Honeywood serve us so ! What shall we do ? Can't we go without it ?

Jar. Go to Scotland without money ! To Scotland without money ! Lord, how some people understand geography ! We might as well set sail for Patagonia
160 upon a cork jacket.

Oliv. Such a disappointment ! What a base, insincere man was your master, to serve us in this manner ! Is this his good-nature ?

Jar. Nay, don't talk ill of my master, madam. I won't bear to hear anybody talk ill of him but myself.

Gar. Bless us ! now I think on't, madam, you need not be under any uneasiness : I saw Mr. Leontine receive forty guineas from his father just before he set out, and he can't yet have left the inn. A short letter will
170 reach him there.

Oliv. Well remembered, Garnet ; I'll write immediately. How's this ! Bless me, my hand trembles so, I can't write a word. Do you write, Garnet ; and, upon second thought, it would be better from you.

Gar. Truly, madam, I write and indite but poorly. I never was 'cute at my learning. But I'll do what I can to please you. Let me see. All out of my own head, I suppose !

Oliv. Whatever you please.

Gar. (*Writing.*) Muster Croaker—Twenty guineas, 180 madam ?

Oliv. Ay, twenty will do.

Gar. At the bar of the Talbot till called for. Expedition—Will be blown up—All of a flame—Quick dispatch—Cupid, the little god of love.—I conclude it, madam, with Cupid : I love to see a love-letter end like poetry.

Oliv. Well, well, what you please, anything. But how shall we send it ? I can trust none of the servants of this family.

Gar. Odso, madam, Mr. Honeywood's butler is in the 190 next room : he's a dear, sweet man ; he'll do anything for me.

Jar. He ! the dog, he'll certainly commit some blunder. He's drunk and sober ten times a day.

Oliv. No matter. Fly, Garnet ; anybody we can trust will do. (*Exit GARNET.*) Well, Jarvis, now we can have nothing more to interrupt us ; you may take up the things, and carry them on to the inn. Have you no hands, Jarvis ?

Jar. Soft and fair, young lady. You, that are going 200 to be married, think things can never be done too fast ; but we, that are old, and know what we are about, must elope methodically, madam.

Oliv. Well, sure, if my indiscretions were to be done over again——

Jar. My life for it, you would do them ten times over.

Oliv. Why will you talk so ? If you knew how unhappy they make me——

Jar. Very unhappy, no doubt : I was once just as 210

unhappy when I was going to be married myself. I'll tell you a story about that——

Oliv. A story ! when I'm all impatience to be away. Was there ever such a dilatory creature !——

Jar. Well, madam, if we must march, why, we will march, that's all. Though, odds bobs, we have still forgot one thing ; we should never travel without—a case of good razors, and a box of shaving-powder. But no matter, I believe we shall be pretty well shaved by
220 the way. [*Going.*

Enter GARNET

Gar. Undone, undone, madam. Ah, Mr. Jarvis, you said right enough. As sure as death, Mr. Honeywood's rogue of a drunken butler dropped the letter before he went ten yards from the door. There's old Croaker has just picked it up, and is this moment reading it to himself in the hall.

Olive. Unfortunate ! We shall be discovered.

Gar. No, madam ; don't be uneasy ; he can make neither head nor tail of it. To be sure he looks as if he
230 was broke loose from Bedlam about it, but he can't find what it means for all that. O Lud, he is coming this way all in the horrors !

Oliv. Then let us leave the house this instant, for fear he should ask further questions. In the meantime, Garnet, do you write and send off just such another.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter CROAKER

Cro. Death and destruction ! Are all the horrors of air, fire, and water, to be levelled only at me ? Am I only to be singled out for gunpowder-plots, combustibles,

and conflagration ? Here it is—an incendiary letter dropped at my door. “To Muster Croaker, these, with 240 speed.” Ay, ay, plain enough the direction : all in the genuine incendiary spelling, and as cramp as the devil. “With speed.” O, confound your speed. But let me read it once more. (*Reads.*) “Muster Croaker, as sone as yow see this, leve twenty gunnes at the bar of the Talboot tell caled for, or yowe and yower experation will be al blown up.” Ah, but too plain. Blood and gunpowder in every line of it. Blown up ! Murderous dog ! All blown up ! Heavens ! what have I and my poor family done, to be all blown up ? (*Reads.*) “Our 250 pockets are low, and money we must have.” Ay, there’s the reason ; they’ll blow us up, because they have got low pockets. (*Reads.*) “It is but a short time you have to consider ; for if this takes wind, the house will quickly be all of a flame.” Inhuman monsters ! blow us up, and then burn us ! The earthquake at Lisbon was but a bonfire to it. (*Reads.*) “Make quick dispatch, and so no more at present. But may Cupid, the little god of love, go with you wherever you go.” The little god of love ! Cupid, the little god of love, go with 260 me ! Go to the devil, you and your little Cupid together. I’m so frightened, I scarce know whether I sit, stand, or go. Perhaps this moment I’m treading on lighted matches, blazing brimstone, and barrels of gunpowder. They are preparing to blow me up into the clouds. Murder ! we shall be all burnt in our beds ; we shall be all burnt in our beds !

Enter MISS RICHLAND

Miss Rich. Lord, sir, what’s the matter ?

G.M.

E

Cro. Murder's the matter ! We shall all be blown up
270 in our beds before morning.

Miss Rich. I hope not, sir.

Cro. What signifies what you hope, madam, when I have a certificate of it here in my hand ? Will nothing alarm my family ? Sleeping and eating, sleeping and eating, is the only work from morning till night in my house. My insensible crew could sleep, though rocked by an earthquake, and fry beef-steaks at a volcano.

Miss Rich. But, sir, you have alarmed them so often
280 already ; we have nothing but earthquakes, famines, plagues, and mad dogs, from year's end to year's end. You remember, sir, it is not above a month ago, you assured us of a conspiracy among the bakers, to poison us in our bread ; and so kept the whole family a week upon potatoes.

Cro. And potatoes were too good for them. But why do I stand talking here with a girl, when I should be facing the enemy without ? Here, John, Nicodemus, search the house. Look into the cellars, to see if there
290 be any combustibles below ; and above, in the apartments, that no matches be thrown in at the windows. Let all the fires be put out, and let the engine be drawn out in the yard, to play upon the house in case of necessity.

[*Exit.*

Miss Rich. (Alone.) What can he mean by all this ? Yet, why should I inquire, when he alarms us in this manner almost every day ? But Honeywood has desired an interview with me in private. What can he mean ? or, rather, what means this palpitation at his
300 approach ? It is the first time he ever showed anything

in his conduct that seemed particular. Sure he cannot mean to—but he's here.

Enter HONEYWOOD

Hon. I presumed to solicit this interview, madam, before I left town, to be permitted——

Miss Rich. Indeed! Leaving town, sir?

Hon. Yes, madam; perhaps the kingdom. I have presumed, I say, to desire the favour of this interview,—in order to disclose something which our long friendship prompts. And yet my fears——

Miss Rich. His fears! What are his fears to mine! 310
(*Aside.*) We have indeed been long acquainted, sir; very long. If I remember, our first meeting was at the French ambassador's. Do you recollect how you were pleased to rally me upon my complexion there?

Hon. Perfectly, madam: I presumed to reprove you for painting; but your warmer blushes soon convinced the company that the colouring was all from nature.

Miss Rich. And yet you only meant it in your good-natured way, to make me pay a compliment to myself. In the same manner you danced that night with the most 320 awkward woman in company, because you saw nobody else would take her out.

Hon. Yes; and was rewarded the next night, by dancing with the finest woman in company, whom everybody wished to take out.

Miss Rich. Well, sir, if you thought so then, I fear your judgment has since corrected the errors of a first impression. We generally show to most advantage at first. Our sex are like poor tradesmen, that put all their best goods to be seen at the windows.

Hon. The first impression, madam, did indeed deceive me. I expected to find a woman with all the faults of conscious flattered beauty ; I expected to find her vain and insolent. But every day has since taught me that it is possible to possess sense without pride, and beauty without affectation.

Miss Rich. This, sir, is a style very unusual with Mr. Honeywood ; and I should be glad to know why he thus attempts to increase that vanity, which his own
340 lessons have taught me to despise.

Hon. I ask pardon, madam. Yet, from our long friendship, I presumed I might have some right to offer, without offence, what you may refuse without offending.

Miss Rich. Sir ! I beg you'd reflect : though, I fear, I shall scarce have any power to refuse a request of yours, yet you may be precipitate : consider, sir.

Hon. I own my rashness ; but as I plead the cause of friendship, of one who loves—don't be alarmed, madam—who loves you with the most ardent passion, whose
350 whole happiness is placed in you——

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, I shall never find whom you mean, by this description of him.

Hon. Ah, madam, it but too plainly points him out ; though he should be too humble himself to urge his pretensions, or you too modest to understand them.

Miss Rich. Well ; it would be affectation any longer to pretend ignorance ; and I will own, sir, I have long been prejudiced in his favour. It was but natural to wish to make his heart mine, as he seemed himself
360 ignorant of its value.

Hon. I see she always loved him. (*Aside.*)—I find, madam, you're already sensible of his worth, his passion.

How happy is my friend, to be the favourite of one with such sense to distinguish merit, and such beauty to reward it !

Miss Rich. Your friend, sir ! What friend ?

Hon. My best friend—my friend Mr. Lofty, madam.

Miss Rich. He, sir !

Hon. Yes, he, madam. He is, indeed, what your warmest wishes might have formed him ; and to his 370 other qualities he adds that of the most passionate regard for you.

Miss Rich. Amazement !—No more of this, I beg you, sir.

Hon. I see your confusion, madam, and know how to interpret it. And, since I so plainly read the language of your heart, shall I make my friend happy, by communicating your sentiments ?

Miss Rich. By no means.

Hon. Excuse me, I must ; I know you desire it. 380

Miss Rich. Mr. Honeywood, let me tell you, that you wrong my sentiments, and yourself. When I first applied to your friendship, I expected advice and assistance ; but now, sir, I see that it is in vain to expect happiness from him, who has been so bad an economist of his own ; and that I must disclaim his friendship who ceases to be a friend to himself. [*Exit.*]

Hon. How is this ! she has confessed she loved him, and yet she seemed to part in displeasure. Can I have done anything to reproach myself with ? No ; I believe 390 not : yet, after all, these things should not be done by a third person : I should have spared her confusion. My friendship carried me a little too far.

Enter CROAKER, with the Letter in his hand, and
MRS. CROAKER

Mrs. Cro. Ha ! ha ! ha ! And so, my dear, it's your supreme wish that I should be quite wretched upon this occasion ? Ha ! ha !

Cro. (Mimicking.) Ha ! ha ! ha ! And so, my dear, it's your supreme pleasure to give me no better consolation ?

400 *Mrs. Cro.* Positively, my dear ; what is this incendiary stuff and trumpery to me ? Our house may travel through the air like the house of Loretto, for aught I care, if I am to be miserable in it.

Cro. Would to heaven it were converted into a house of correction for your benefit ! Have we not everything to alarm us ? Perhaps this very moment the tragedy is beginning.

Mrs. Cro. Then let us reserve our distress till the rising of the curtain, or give them the money they want,
410 and have done with them.

Cro. Give them my money !—And pray, what right have they to my money ?

Mrs. Cro. And pray, what right then have you to my good humour ?

Cro. And so your good humour advises me to part with my money ? Why then, to tell your good humour a piece of my mind, I'd sooner part with my wife. Here's Mr. Honeywood ; see what he'll say to it. My dear Honeywood, look at this incendiary letter, dropped at
420 my door. It will freeze you with terror ; and yet lovey here can read it—can read it, and laugh !

Mrs. Cro. Yes, and so will Mr. Honeywood.

Cro. If he does, I'll suffer to be hanged the next minute in the rogue's place, that's all.

Mrs. Cro. Speak, Mr. Honeywood ; is there anything more foolish than my husband's fright upon this occasion ?

Hon. It would not become me to decide, madam ; but, doubtless, the greatness of his terrors now will but invite them to renew their villainy another time. 430

Mrs. Cro. I told you he'd be of my opinion.

Cro. How, sir ! do you maintain that I should lie down under such an injury, and show neither by my tears, nor complaints, that I have something of the spirit of a man in me ?

Hon. Pardon me, sir. You ought to make the loudest complaints, if you desire redress. The surest way to have redress is to be earnest in the pursuit of it.

Cro. Ay, whose opinion is he of now ? 440

Mrs. Cro. But don't you think that laughing off our fears is the best way ?

Hon. What is the best, madam, few can say ; but I'll maintain it to be a very wise way.

Cro. But we're talking of the best. Surely the best way is to face the enemy in the field, and not wait till he plunders us in our very bed-chamber.

Hon. Why, sir, as to the best, that—that's a very wise way too.

Mrs. Cro. But can anything be more absurd than to 450 double our distresses by our apprehensions, and put it in the power of every low fellow, that can scrawl ten words of wretched spelling, to torment us ?

Hon. Without doubt, nothing more absurd.

Cro. How ! would it not be more absurd to despise the rattle till we are bit by the snake ?

Hon. Without doubt, perfectly absurd.

Cro. Then you are of my opinion ?

Hon. Entirely.

460 *Mrs. Cro.* And you reject mine ?

Hon. Heavens forbid, madam ! No, sure, no reasoning can be more just than yours. We ought certainly to despise malice if we cannot oppose it, and not make the incendiary's pen as fatal to our repose as the highwayman's pistol.

Mrs. Cro. Oh ! then you think I'm quite right ?

Hon. Perfectly right.

Cro. A plague of plagues, we can't be both right ! I ought to be sorry, or I ought to be glad. My hat must
470 be on my head, or my hat must be off.

Mrs. Cro. Certainly, in two opposite opinions, if one be perfectly reasonable, the other can't be perfectly right.

Hon. And why may not both be right, madam ?
Mr. Croaker in earnestly seeking redress, and you in waiting the event with good humour ? Pray, let me see the letter again. I have it. This letter requires twenty guineas to be left at the bar of the Talbot inn. If it be indeed an incendiary letter, what if you and I, sir, go there ; and, when the writer comes to be paid for his
480 expected booty, seize him ?

Cro. My dear friend, it's the very thing ; the very thing. While I walk by the door, you shall plant yourself in ambush near the bar ; burst out upon the miscreant like a masked battery ; extort a confession at once, and so hang him up by surprise.

Hon. Yes, but I would not choose to exercise too much

severity. It is my maxim, sir, that crimes generally punish themselves.

Cro. Well, but we may upbraid him a little, I suppose ?
[*Ironically.*

Hon. Ay, but not punish him too rigidly. 490

Cro. Well, well, leave that to my own benevolence.

Hon. Well, I do ; but remember that universal benevolence is the first law of nature.

[*Exeunt HONEYWOOD and MRS. CROAKER.*

Cro. Yes ; and my universal benevolence will hang the dog, if he had as many necks as a hydra !

ACT THE FIFTH

SCENE—*An Inn*

Enter OLIVIA and JARVIS

Oliv. Well, we have got safe to the inn, however. Now, if the post-chaise were ready——

Jar. The horses are just finishing their oats ; and, as they are not going to be married, they choose to take their own time.

Oliv. You are for ever giving wrong motives to my impatience.

Jar. Be as impatient as you will, the horses must take their own time ; besides, you don't consider, we have
10 got no answer from our fellow-traveller yet. If we hear nothing from Mr. Leontine, we have only one way left us.

Oliv. What way ?

Jar. The way home again.

Oliv. Not so. I have made a resolution to go, and nothing shall induce me to break it.

Jar. Ay ; resolutions are well kept, when they jump with inclination. However, I'll go hasten things without. And I'll call, too, at the bar, to see if anything should be left for us there. Don't be in such a plaguey
20 hurry, madam, and we shall go the faster, I promise you.

[Exit.

Enter LANDLADY

Land. What ! Solomon, why don't you move ? Pipes and tobacco for the Lamb there.—Will nobody answer ? To the Dolphin : quick. The Angel has been outrageous this half-hour. Did your ladyship call, madam ?

Oliv. No, madam.

Land. I find, as you're for Scotland, madam—But that's no business of mine ; married, or not married, I ask no questions. To be sure we had a sweet little couple set off from this two days ago for the same place. The gentleman, for a tailor, was, to be sure, as fine a spoken 30 tailor as ever blew froth from a full pot. And the young lady so bashful, it was near half an hour before we could get her to finish a pint of raspberry between us.

Oliv. But this gentleman and I are not going to be married, I assure you.

Land. May be not. That's no business of mine ; for certain, Scotch marriages seldom turn out.—There was, of my own knowledge, Miss Macfag, that married her father's footman—Alack-a-day, she and her husband soon parted, and now keep separate cellars in Hedge-lane. 40

Oliv. A very pretty picture of what lies before me.

[Aside.]

Enter LEONTINE

Leon. My dear Olivia, my anxiety, till you were out of danger, was too great to be resisted. I could not help coming to see you set out, though it exposes us to a discovery.

Oliv. May everything you do prove as fortunate. Indeed, Leontine, we have been most cruelly disappointed. Mr. Honeywood's bill upon the city has, it

seems, been protested, and we have been utterly at a loss
50 how to proceed.

Leon. How ! an offer of his own too. Sure, he could not mean to deceive us ?

Oliv. Depend upon his sincerity ; he only mistook the desire for the power of serving us. But let us think no more of it. I believe the post-chaise is ready by this.

Land. Not quite yet : and, begging your ladyship's pardon, I don't think your ladyship quite ready for the post-chaise. The north road is a cold place, madam. I
60 have a drop in the house of as pretty raspberry as ever was tipt over tongue. Just a thimble-full to keep the wind off your stomach. To be sure, the last couple we had here, they said it was a perfect nosegay. Ecod, I sent them both away as good-natured—Up went the blinds, round went the wheels, and drive away post-boy, was the word.

Enter CROAKER

Cro. Well, while my friend Honeywood is upon the post of danger at the bar, it must be my business to have an eye about me here. I think I know an incendiary's
70 look ; for wherever the devil makes a purchase, he never fails to set his mark. Ha ! who have we here ? My son and daughter ! What can they be doing here ?

Land. I tell you, madam, it will do you good ; I think I know by this time what's good for the north road. It's a raw night, madam.—Sir——

Leon. Not a drop more, good madam. I should now take it as a greater favour, if you hasten the horses, for I am afraid to be seen myself.

Land. That shall be done. Wha, Solomon ! are you all dead there ? Wha, Solomon, I say ! [*Exit, bawling.* 80

Oliv. Well, I dread lest an expedition begun in fear, should end in repentance.—Every moment we stay increases our danger, and adds to my apprehensions.

Leon. There's no danger, trust me, my dear ; there can be none. If Honeywood has acted with honour, and kept my father, as he promised, in employment till we are out of danger, nothing can interrupt our journey.

Oliv. I have no doubt of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity, and even his desire to serve us. My fears are from your father's suspicions. A mind so disposed to be alarmed 90 without a cause, will be but too ready when there's a reason.

Leon. Why, let him, when we are out of his power. But believe me, Olivia, you have no great reason to dread his resentment. His repining temper, as it does no manner of injury to himself, so will it never do harm to others. He only frets to keep himself employed, and scolds for his private amusement.

Oliv. I don't know that ; but, I'm sure, on some occasions, it makes him look most shockingly. 100

Cro. (*Discovering himself.*) How does he look now ? —How does he look now ?

Oliv. Ah !

Leon. Undone.

Cro. How do I look now ? Sir, I am your very humble servant. Madam, I am yours. What, you are going off, are you ? Then, first, if you please, take a word or two from me with you before you go. Tell me first where you are going ; and when you have told me that, perhaps I shall know as little as I did before. 110

Leon. If that be so, our answer might but increase your displeasure, without adding to your information.

Cro. I want no information from you, puppy : and you too, good madam, what answer have you got ? Eh ! (*A cry without, Stop him !*) I think I heard a noise. My friend Honeywood without—has he seized the incendiary ? Ah, no ; for now I hear no more on't.

Leon. Honeywood without ! Then, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood that directed you hither ?

120 *Cro.* No, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood conducted me hither.

Leon. Is it possible ?

Cro. Possible ! Why, he's in the house now, sir ; more anxious about me than my own son, sir.

Leon. Then, sir, he's a villain.

Cro. How, sirrah ! a villain, because he takes most care of your father ? I'll not bear it. I tell you I'll not bear it. Honeywood is a friend to the family, and I'll have him treated as such.

Leon. I shall study to repay his friendship as it
130 deserves.

Cro. Ah, rogue, if you knew how earnestly he entered into my griefs, and pointed out the means to detect them, you would love him as I do. (*A cry without, Stop him !*) Fire and fury ! they have seized the incendiary : they have the villain, the incendiary in view. Stop him ! stop an incendiary ! a murderer ! stop him ! [*Exit.*]

Oliv. Oh, my terrors ! What can this tumult mean ?

Leon. Some new mark, I suppose, of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity. But we shall have satisfaction : he
140 shall give me instant satisfaction.

Oliv. It must not be, my Leontine, if you value my esteem or my happiness. Whatever be our fate, let us

not add guilt to our misfortunes—Consider that our innocence will shortly be all that we have left us. You must forgive him.

Leon. Forgive him ! Has he not in every instance betrayed us ? Forced me to borrow money from him, which appears a mere trick to delay us ; promised to keep my father engaged till we were out of danger, and here brought him to the very scene of our escape. 150

Oliv. Don't be precipitate. We may yet be mistaken.

*Enter POSTBOY, dragging in JARVIS ; HONEYWOOD
entering soon after*

Post. Ay, master, we have him safe enough. Here is the incendiary dog. I'm entitled to the reward : I'll take my oath I saw him ask for the money at the bar, and then run for it.

Hon. Come, bring him along. Let us see him. Let him learn to blush for his crimes. (*Discovering his mistake.*) Death ! what's here ? Jarvis, Leontine, Olivia ! What can all this mean ?

Jar. Why, I'll tell you what it means : that I was an old fool, and that you are my master—that's all.

Hon. Confusion !

Leon. Yes, sir, I find you have kept your word with me. After such baseness, I wonder how you can venture to see the man you have injured.

Hon. My dear Leontine, by my life, my honour—

Leon. Peace, peace, for shame ; and do not continue to aggravate baseness by hypocrisy. I know you, sir, I know you.

Hon. Why, won't you hear me ? By all that's just I knew not—

Leon. Hear you, sir ! to what purpose ? I now see through all your low arts ; your ever complying with every opinion ; your never refusing any request : your friendship common and fallacious ; all these, sir, have long been contemptible to the world, and are now perfectly so to me.

Hon. Ha ! contemptible to the world ! that reaches me. [*Aside.*

180 *Leon.* All the seeming sincerity of your professions, I now find, were only allurements to betray ; and all your seeming regret for their consequences, only calculated to cover the cowardice of your heart. Draw, villain !

Enter CROAKER, out of breath

Cro. Where is the villain ? Where is the incendiary ? (*Seizing the POSTBOY.*) Hold him fast, the dog : he has the gallows in his face. Come, you dog, confess ; confess all, and hang yourself.

Post. Halloa ! master, what do you throttle me for ?

Cro. (*Beating him.*) Dog, do you resist ? do you
190 resist ?

Post. Zounds ! master, I'm not he ; there's the man that we thought was the rogue, and turns out to be one of the company.

Cro. How !

Hon. Mr. Croaker, we have all been under a strange mistake here ; I find there is nobody guilty ; it was all an error ; entirely an error of our own.

Cro. And I say, sir, that you're in an error ; for there's guilt and double guilt, a plot, a damn'd jesuitical,
200 pestilential plot, and I must have proof of it.

Hon. Do but hear me.

Cro. What, you intend to bring 'em off, I suppose ? I'll hear nothing.

Hon. Madam, you seem at least calm enough to hear reason.

Oliv. Excuse me.

Hon. Good Jarvis, let me then explain it to you.

Jar. What signifies explanations when the thing is done ?

Hon. Will nobody hear me ? Was there ever such a 210
set so blinded by passion and prejudice ? (*To the Post-boy.*) My good friend, I believe you'll be surprised, when I assure you——

Post. 'Sure me nothing—I'm sure of nothing but a good beating.

Cro. Come then, you, madam, if you ever hope for any favour or forgiveness, tell me sincerely all you know of this affair.

Oliv. Unhappily, sir, I'm but too much the cause of your suspicions ; you see before you, sir, one that with 220
false pretences has stepped into your family to betray it ; not your daughter——

Cro. Not my daughter ?

Oliv. Not your daughter—but a mean deceiver—who—support me, I cannot——

Hon. Help, she's going ; give her air.

Cro. Ay, ay, take the young woman to the air ; I would not hurt a hair of her head, whose ever daughter she may be—not so bad as that neither.

[*Exeunt all but CROAKER.*

Cro. Yes, yes, all's out ; I now see the whole affair : 230
my son is either married, or going to be so, to this lady, whom he imposed upon me as his sister. Ay, certainly

so ; and yet I don't find it afflicts me so much as one might think. There's the advantage of fretting away our misfortunes beforehand : we never feel them when they come.

Enter MISS RICHLAND and SIR WILLIAM

Sir Wil. But how do you know, madam, that my nephew intends setting off from this place ?

Miss Rich. My maid assured me he was come to this
240 inn ; and my own knowledge of his intending to leave the kingdom, suggested the rest. But what do I see ! my guardian here before us ! Who, my dear sir, could have expected meeting you here ? to what accident do we owe this pleasure ?

Cro. To a fool, I believe.

Miss Rich. But to what purpose did you come ?

Cro. To play the fool.

Miss Rich. But with whom ?

Cro. With greater fools than myself.

250 *Miss Rich.* Explain.

Cro. Why, Mr. Honeywood brought me here, to do nothing now I am here ; and my son is going to be married to I don't know who, that is here : so now you are as wise as I am.

Miss Rich. Married ! to whom, sir ?

Cro. To Olivia, my daughter, as I took her to be ; but who the devil she is, or whose daughter she is, I know no more than the man in the moon.

Sir Wil. Then, sir, I can inform you ; and, though a
260 stranger, yet you shall find me a friend to your family. It will be enough at present to assure you, that both in point of birth and fortune, the young lady is at least

your son's equal. Being left by her father, Sir James Woodville——

Cro. Sir James Woodville ! What, of the west ?

Sir Wil. Being left by him, I say, to the care of a mercenary wretch, whose only aim was to secure her fortune to himself, she was sent to France, under pretence of education ; and there every art was tried to fix her for life in a convent, contrary to her inclinations. Of 270 this I was informed upon my arrival at Paris ; and, as I had been once her father's friend, I did all in my power to frustrate her guardian's base intentions. I had even meditated to rescue her from his authority, when your son stepped in with more pleasing violence, gave her liberty, and you a daughter.

Cro. But I intend to have a daughter of my own choosing, sir. A young lady, sir, whose fortune, by my interest with those who have interest, will be double what my son has a right to expect. Do you know 280 Mr. Lofty, sir ?

Sir Wil. Yes, sir ; and know that you are deceived in him. But step this way, and I'll convince you.

[CROAKER and SIR WILLIAM seem to confer.

Enter HONEYWOOD

Hon. Obstinate man, still to persist in his outrage ! insulted by him, despised by all, I now begin to grow contemptible, even to myself. How have I sunk by too great an assiduity to please ! How have I overtaxed all my abilities, lest the approbation of a single fool should escape me ! But all is now over ; I have survived my reputation, my fortune, my friendships, and nothing 290 remains henceforward for me but solitude and repentance.

Miss Rich. Is it true, Mr. Honeywood, that you are setting off, without taking leave of your friends? The report is, that you are quitting England. Can it be?

Hon. Yes, madam; and though I am so unhappy as to have fallen under your displeasure, yet, thank Heaven, I leave you to happiness; to one who loves you, and deserves your love: to one who has power to procure your affluence, and generosity to improve your enjoyment
300 of it.

Miss Rich. And are you sure, sir, that the gentleman you mean is what you describe him?

Hon. I have the best assurances of it—his serving me. He does indeed deserve the highest happiness, and that is in your power to confer. As for me, weak and wavering as I have been, obliged by all, and incapable of serving any, what happiness can I find but in solitude? What hope, but in being forgotten?

Miss Rich. A thousand! to live among friends that
310 esteem you, whose happiness it will be to be permitted to oblige you.

Hon. No, madam, my resolution is fixed. Inferiority among strangers is easy; but among those that once were equals, insupportable. Nay, to show you how far my resolution can go, I can now speak with calmness of my former follies, my vanity, my dissipation, my weakness. I will even confess, that, among the number of my other presumptions, I had the insolence to think of loving you. Yes, madam, while I was plead-
320 ing the passion of another, my heart was tortured with its own. But it is over; it was unworthy our friendship, and let it be forgotten.

Miss Rich. You amaze me!

Hon. But you'll forgive it, I know you will ; since the confession should not have come from me even now, but to convince you of the sincerity of my intention of—never mentioning it more. [Going.

Miss Rich. Stay, sir, one moment—Ha ! he here——

Enter LOFTY

Lof. Is the coast clear ? None but friends. I have followed you here with a trifling piece of intelligence ; 330 but it goes no farther ; things are not yet ripe for a discovery. I have spirits working at a certain board ; your affair at the Treasury will be done in less than—a thousand years. Mum !

Miss Rich. Sooner, sir, I should hope.

Lof. Why, yes, I believe it may, if it falls into proper hands, that know where to push and where to parry : that know how the land lies—eh, Honeywood !

Miss Rich. It has fallen into yours.

Lof. Well, to keep you no longer in suspense, your 340 thing is done. It is done, I say—that's all. I have just had assurances from Lord Neverout, that the claim has been examined, and found admissible. *Quietus* is the word, madam.

Hon. But how ? his lordship has been at Newmarket these ten days.

Lof. Indeed ! Then Sir Gilbert Goose must have been most damnably mistaken. I had it of him.

Miss Rich. He ! why Sir Gilbert and his family have been in the country this month. 350

Lof. This month ! it must certainly be so—Sir Gilbert's letter did come to me from Newmarket, so that he must have met his lordship there ; and so it came

about. I have his letter about me ; I'll read it to you.
(*Taking out a large bundle.*) That's from Paoli of Corsica ; that from the Marquis of Squilachi.—Have you a mind to see a letter from Count Poniatowski, now King of Poland ?—Honest Pon—(*Searching.*) Oh, sir, what, are you here, too ? I'll tell you what, honest friend, if
360 you have not absolutely delivered my letter to Sir William Honeywood, you may return it. The thing will do without him.

Sir Wil. Sir, I have delivered it ; and must inform you, it was received with the most mortifying contempt.

Cro. Contempt ? Mr. Lofty, what can that mean ?

Lof. Let him go on, let him go on, I say. You'll find it came to something presently.

Sir Wil. Yes, sir ; I believe you'll be amazed, if after waiting some time in the ante-chamber, after being
370 surveyed with insolent curiosity by the passing servants, I was at last assured, that Sir William Honeywood knew no such person, and I must certainly have been imposed upon.

Lof. Good ! let me die ; very good. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Cro. Now, for my life I can't find out half the goodness of it.

Lof. You can't. Ha ! ha !

Cro. No, for the soul of me ! I think it was as confounded a bad answer as ever was sent from one private
380 gentleman to another.

Lof. And so you can't find out the force of the message ? Why, I was in the house at that very time. Ha ! ha ! It was I that sent that very answer to my own letter. Ha ! ha !

Cro. Indeed ! How ? why ?

Lof. In one word, things between Sir William and me must be behind the curtain. A party has many eyes. He sides with Lord Buzzard, I side with Sir Gilbert Goose. So that unriddles the mystery.

Cro. And so it does, indeed ; and all my suspicions 390 are over.

Lof. Your suspicions ! What, then, you have been suspecting, you have been suspecting, have you ? Mr. Croaker, you and I were friends ; we are friends no longer. Never talk to me. It's over ; I say, it's over.

Cro. As I hope for your favour I did not mean to offend. It escaped me. Don't be discomposed.

Lof. Zounds ! sir, but I am discomposed, and will be discomposed. To be treated thus ! Who am I ? Was it for this I have been dreaded both by ins and outs ? 400 Have I been libelled in the *Gazetteer*, and praised in the *St. James's* ? Have I been chaired at Wildman's, and a speaker at Merchant Tailors' Hall ? Have I had my hand to addresses, and my head in the print-shops ; and talk to me of suspects ?

Cro. My dear sir, be pacified. What can you have but asking pardon ?

Lof. Sir, I will not be pacified—Suspects ! Who am I ? To be used thus ! Have I paid court to men in favour to serve my friends ; the Lords of the Treasury, Sir 410 William Honeywood, and the rest of the gang, and talk to me of suspects ? Who am I, I say ; who am I ?

Sir Wil. Since, sir, you are so pressing for an answer, I'll tell you who you are. A gentleman, as well acquainted with politics as with men in power ; as well acquainted with persons of fashion as with modesty ; with Lords of the Treasury as with truth ; and with all,

as you are with Sir William Honeywood. I am Sir William Honeywood.

[Discovering his ensigns of the Bath.]

420 *Cro.* Sir William Honeywood !

Hon. Astonishment ! my uncle ! *[Aside.]*

Lof. So then, my confounded genius has been all this time only leading me up to the garret, in order to fling me out of the window.

Cro. What, Mr. Importance, and are these your works ? Suspect you ? You, who have been dreaded by the ins and outs ; you, who have had your hand to addresses, and your head stuck up in print-shops. If you were served right, you should have your head stuck
430 up in a pillory.

Lof. Ay, stick it where you will ; for, by the Lord, it cuts but a very poor figure where it sticks at present.

Sir Wil. Well, Mr. Croaker, I hope you now see how incapable this gentleman is of serving you, and how little Miss Richland has to expect from his influence.

Cro. Ay, sir, too well I see it ; and I can't but say I have had some boding of it these ten days. So, I'm resolved, since my son has placed his affections on a lady of moderate fortune, to be satisfied with his choice, and
440 not run the hazard of another Mr. Lofty in helping him to a better.

Sir Wil. I approve your resolution ; and here they come to receive a confirmation of your pardon and consent.

Enter MRS. CROAKER, JARVIS, LEONTINE, and OLIVIA

Mrs. Cro. Where's my husband ? Come, come, lovey, you must forgive them. Jarvis here has been to tell me

the whole affair ; and I say, you must forgive them. Our own was a stolen match, you know, my dear ; and we never had any reason to repent of it.

Cro. I wish we could both say so. However, this gentleman, Sir William Honeywood, has been beforehand with you in obtaining their pardon. So, if the two poor fools have a mind to marry, I think we can tack them together without crossing the Tweed for it.

[Joining their hands.]

Leon. How blest and unexpected ! What, what can we say to such goodness ? But our future obedience shall be the best reply. And as for this gentleman, to whom we owe——

Sir Wil. Excuse me, sir, if I interrupt your thanks, as I have here an interest that calls me. (*Turning to* 460 *HONEYWOOD.*) Yes, sir, you are surprised to see me : and I own that a desire of correcting your follies led me hither. I saw with indignation the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others ; that easiness of disposition, which, though inclined to the right, had not courage to condemn the wrong. I saw with regret those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty ; your charity, that was but injustice ; your benevolence, that was but weakness ; and your friendship, but credulity. I saw with regret great talents 470 and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to error, and increase your perplexities. I saw your mind with a thousand natural charms ; but the greatness of its beauty served only to heighten my pity for its prostitution.

Hon. Cease to upbraid me, sir : I have for some time but too strongly felt the justice of your reproaches. But

there is one way still left me. Yes, sir, I have determined this very hour to quit for ever a place where I
480 have made myself the voluntary slave of all, and to seek among strangers that fortitude which may give strength to the mind, and marshal all its dissipated virtues. Yet ere I depart, permit me to solicit favour for this gentleman; who, notwithstanding what has happened, has laid me under the most signal obligations. Mr Lofty—

Lof. Mr. Honeywood, I'm resolved upon a reformation as well as you. I now begin to find that the man who first invented the art of speaking truth, was a much cunninger fellow than I thought him. And to prove
490 that I design to speak truth for the future, I must now assure you, that you owe your late enlargement to another; as, upon my soul, I had no hand in the matter. So now, if any of the company has a mind for preferment, he may take my place, I'm determined to resign.

[*Exit.*

Hon. How have I been deceived!

Sir Wil. No, sir, you have been obliged to a kinder, fairer friend for that favour. To Miss Richland. Would she complete our joy, and make the man she has honoured by her friendship happy in her love, I shall
500 then forget all, and be as blest as the welfare of my dearest kinsman can make me.

Miss Rich. After what is past it would be but affectation to pretend to indifference. Yes, I will own an attachment, which I find was more than friendship. And if my entreaties cannot alter his resolution to quit the country, I will even try if my hand has not power to detain him.

[*Giving her hand.*

Hon. Heavens! how can I have deserved all this?

How express my happiness, my gratitude ? A moment like this overpays an age of apprehension. 510

Cro. Well, now I see content in every face ; but Heaven send we be all better this day three months !

Sir Wil. Henceforth, nephew, learn to respect yourself. He who seeks only for applause from without, has all his happiness in another's keeping.

Hon. Yes, sir, I now too plainly perceive my errors ; my vanity, in attempting to please all by fearing to offend any ; my meanness, in approving folly lest fools should disapprove. Henceforth, therefore, it shall be my study to reserve my pity for real distress ; my 520 friendship for true merit ; and my love for her, who first taught me what it is to be happy.

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS. BULKLEY

As puffing quacks some caitiff wretch procure
To swear the pill, or drop, has wrought a cure ;
Thus, on the stage, our playwrights still depend
For Epilogues and Prologues on some friend,
Who knows each art of coaxing up the town,
And makes full many a bitter pill go down.
Conscious of this, our hard has gone about,
And teased each rhyming friend to help him out.
An Epilogue, things can't go on without it ;
It could not fail, would you but set about it. 10
Young man, cries one (a bard laid up in clover),
Alas ! young man, my writing days are over ;
Let boys play tricks, and kick the straw, not I ;
Your brother doctor there, perhaps, may try.
What, I ! dear sir, the doctor interposes ;
What, plant my thistle, sir, among his roses !
No, no, I've other contests to maintain ;
To-night I head our troops at Warwick-lane.
Go ask your manager—Who, me ! Your pardon ;
Those things are not our forte at Covent-garden. 20
Our author's friends, thus placed at happy distance,
Give him good words indeed, but no assistance.
As some unhappy wight at some new play,
At the pit door stands elbowing away ;

While oft, with many a smile, and many a shrug,
He eyes the centre, where his friends sit snug ;
His simpering friends, with pleasure in their eyes,
Sink as he sinks, and as he rises rise :
He nods, they nod ; he cringes, they grimace ;
But not a soul will budge to give him place. 30
Since then, unhelped, our bard must now conform
“ To 'bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,”
Blame where you must, be candid where you can,
And be each critic the *Good-Natured Man*.

NOTES

THE PROLOGUE

Dr. Johnson. Boswell says that Johnson "suffered great perturbation and distraction in 1768. Nothing of his writing was given to the public this year, except the Prologue to his friend Goldsmith's comedy of *The Good-Natured Man*." This explains why, as he continues, "The first lines of this Prologue are strongly characteristic of the dismal gloom of his mind . . . but this dark ground might make Goldsmith's humour shine the more." This may be, but its gloomy opening hardly put the audience in a receptive mood for such humour.

Mr. Bensley. This was Robert Bensley, a celebrated actor who lived from 1738-1817, retiring from the stage in 1796. He was especially good as Iago.

L. 5. our anxious bard. Johnson originally wrote "our little bard," but the sensitive author had the epithet altered.

L. 7. Caesar's pilot. Caesar said to his pilot in a storm, "*Caesarem portas et fortunas ejus*." The pilot happens to derive an accidental dignity from being responsible for so mighty a man as Caesar, and though far beneath him, he shares the same dangers. The simile refers to the author of this comedy.

L. 10. the pit. The theatres of this time had no stalls, and so the whole floor was occupied by the pit. Besides being numerically stronger, the pit also gave louder vent to its opinions than other parts of the house, and so, in order for his play to be heard, an author was at pains to placate it.

L. 18. that blest year, i.e. the year of an election.

L. 22. swelling Crispin. Some cobbler full of his own importance. Crispin was the patron saint of shoemakers.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Powell protested that he could do nothing with the character of Honeywood, and the success of the play was due really to

Mr. Shuter's interpretation of Croaker, and Goldsmith after the first performance rushed round, with his customary impulsiveness and generosity, and assured him that "the fine comic richness of his colouring made it almost appear as new" (because so fresh and living) "to him as to any other person in the house." Shuter played Mr. Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer*.

Mr. Woodward refused the part of Tony Lumpkin in Goldsmith's second play, and only spoke the Prologue. The part of Tony was given to

Mr. Quick, who was only the postboy in this comedy; Goldsmith adapted a scene from Sedley's translation of Brueys' *Le Gondeur* for his benefit in 1773.

Mrs. Bulkley subsequently took the part of Kate Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer*, in which Goldsmith put up with much inconvenience over her inability to sing, because he was grateful to her for her performance in his first play: he had to alter the epilogue and omit a song.

ACT I.

L. 26. **an arrant jade.** A poor thing to trust.

L. 46. **taken up the security.** Sir William has repaid the debt, so it is now owing to him.

L. 49. **to clap an officer.** To have him suddenly arrested. This, of course, is a clue: the action is being set going—rather clumsily perhaps, as if a thumb were to poke at the wheels when they would not revolve of themselves.

L. 62. **What a pity it is, Jarvis.** This will be seen to be the "moral" of the play.

L. 81. **Crooked Lane.** Crooked Lane, Cannon Street, in the City.

L. 88. **in the Fleet.** This prison, to which debtors were committed, took its name from being situate by the side of the river Fleet, now covered over.

L. 117. **Tyburn.** The gallows anciently stood at Tyburn Gate, where Marble Arch now is, and parties were made up to watch the hangings.

L. 187. **A raven.** The raven was considered a bird of ill-omen, if it alighted on a house: cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 1. 191. "Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I would croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode," and the last verse of the song with which *The Two Noble Kinsmen* begins.

L. 188. rue was a symbol of grieved remembrance ; much used by Shakespeare to gain an effect of pathos.

L. 208. Jesuits. At this time, the Jesuits were suspected to be in favour of the Stuart cause. There was also a great movement against them in Europe, which began in Portugal. Then the Parliament of Paris in May, 1767, supplicated the King to obtain from the Pope, Clement XIII., their complete suppression. The Pope died on the day the question was to have been decided by him, and his successor died soon after, from poison supposed to have been given him by the Jesuits.

L. 232. a little of your fine serious advice. This is another straw put down to show which way the wind will blow when it is strong enough. So also was Jarvis's remark about "the match between his son and Miss Richland."

L. 278. the prospect is hideous. Honeywood is here acting a part, to humour Croaker. Goldsmith repeats this phrase in Letter LXXIII. of *The Citizen of the World*.

L. 279. Life at the greatest. The sentence is not Croaker's own. He is quoting a much admired sentence from Sir William Temple's essay on Music and Poetry.

L. 292. the late earthquake. An alarm about earthquakes began in London in 1750, and lasted nearly twenty years. The great earthquake of Lisbon, 1755 (here referred to), intensified the fear.

L. 310. bidding like a fury against herself. Because she was deaf, she did not know that no one else was bidding ; and so she kept on raising the cost of articles that had already been knocked down to her, by continuing to make offers for them.

L. 311. so curious in antiques. Inquisitive about them, liking to examine them, because she knows about antiques.

L. 352. a side-box. These would be the most conspicuous seats in the theatre.

L. 353. Almack's. The name of these rooms derives from a Scotsman named Macall, who inverted his own name to obviate prejudice on account of his race. Balls given here were so smart that "to be admitted to them was as great a distinction as to be introduced at Court" (Brewer). These rooms, which were in King Street, St James's, must not be confused with the gambling club of the same name which was founded a year later.

L. 355. one of the painted ruins. It was the fashion at this time to dot gardens with sham ruins. The classic, who must regulate even nature, and the romantic, who saw beauty in decay and disorder, here met, for the former was not faced with only country pleasures when he walked abroad, and the latter found

something very affecting and picturesque in a few bricks or an arrangement of wood and canvas. Kew Gardens had several such ruins, caves and grottoes, much ridiculed by the poets, and there is still standing a sham ruined arch. Goldsmith in Letter LXXI. of the *Citizen* very amusingly describes a visit to the gardens at Vauxhall.

L. 396. **But consider, Leontine.** These speeches delivered by Olivia and Leontine betray once again the inexperienced dramatist, who must "explain" his characters' actions in long speeches delivered at the audience.

L. 445. **a trip to Scotland.** All that used to be required in Scotland of people marrying was a mutual declaration of their willingness. No banns, licence or priest were needed, and so "a trip to Scotland," usually to the blacksmith's forge at Gretna Green, was very popular with eloping lovers.

L. 503. **the curry-comb maker.** Curry-combs are iron instruments for grooming horses.

lying in state. Lying-in-state was in the eighteenth century common even for tradesmen. See Letter XII. of the *Citizen of the World*, which also affords an example of the reasons that made and keep Goldsmith so popular.

L. 504. **becomes.** Suits.

ACT II.

L. 42. **'cuteness.** Many people imagine that the abbreviation is a modern vulgar Americanism.

L. 78. **another-guess lover.** A lover demanding a second guess, your first guess being wide of the mark.

L. 80. **Call up a look.** Summon a look ('to your face' understood), and the look in question must be loving.

L. 108. **St. James's.** The chief clubs and chocolate houses were in St. James's, then at the height of its fashion. In Dickens' *Dictionary of London* it may be read that "the political history of the last century centres in the club-houses of St. James's. White's was founded in 1739, the Cocoa Tree in 1746. Brooks's in 1764."

L. 153. **a Frenchified cover.** Envelopes were not in general use, and letters were folded; this one, however, was put in an envelope, still regarded as a novelty.

L. 187. **a backstairs favourite.** "Backstairs" denotes secret influence. See Burke's *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, "a

cabal of the closets and backstairs was substituted in the place of a national administration."

L. 220. *the Venetian ambassador*. Venice remained a sovereign state till 1797, when it was overturned by Napoleon.

L. 250. *Waller*. Edmund Waller, most famous for the love poems addressed to Lady Dorothea Sidney (under the name of Saccharissa), was born in 1605 and died in 1687. It will be seen, therefore, that he had been dead eighty years when Mrs. Croaker called him "modern." He was, actually, "of the House," having been a member at the age of 17.

L. 258. *land-carriage fishery*. This was a project for importing fish wholesale from the coast to the inland towns. See *The Bee*, No. 6.

L. 259. *a jag-hire*. In India, a grant of land to an individual in consideration of services to the Government. From the Persian *ja*, place, and *gir*, take. Indian affairs, and consequently Indian words, were rather prominent about this time, owing to the maladministration of the Company.

L. 284. *in bronze*. Immovable as a statue, inexorable.

L. 298. *understrappers*. Originally grooms who buckled a rider's spur-straps. Thence the word came to mean subordinates, and was so used by Swift in his *Journal to Stella*:—"I have instructed an underspur-leather to write so, that it is taken for mine."

L. 315. *the last new comedy* was actually the *False Delicacy* of Kelly, Goldsmith's rival. But it is more likely that the thrust is aimed at the comedy of the time in general.

L. 376. *the decorums*. Appearances. The dialogue of which this speech is the beginning is a good instance of dramatic irony.

L. 402. *to be stuck up in a corner*. That is, out of sight.

L. 407. *a dead Russian*. The ground was frozen so hard during the winter in Russia that graves could not be dug, and corpses were sometimes kept unburied till a thaw. The point of the pipe is to give a semblance of life to the corpse while waiting.

L. 454. *rhodomontade*. Boastful or ranting, from Rodomonte, a character in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.

ACT III.

L. 3. *cribbage*. A card game for two, three or four players. Men that would stake so high on what was not considered a gambling game were obviously daring.

L. 20. a special *capus*. The first example of "lowness," for this is the bailiff's way of pronouncing a writ (*capias ad satisfaciendum*) or summons (*capias ad respondendum*).

L. 72. set in case. Suppose.

L. 76. smoke. Look at, observe, get wind of; a slang term, now obsolete. It may have derived from the proverb about there being no smoke without a fire, the idea being that if you follow the smoke, you come to the fire. The word occurs in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, chap. vii. 24.

L. 95. not a prettier scout. "There's not a cleverer detective in all the four counties round London (Essex, Middlesex, Surrey, Kent)."

L. 97. the black Queen of Morocco. An allusion to Elkanah Settle's play of that name, first acted in 1681.

L. 120. circuit weather. The weather was obviously of considerable importance to the judges who went on circuit, in days when roads were bad.

L. 136. Hawke or Amherst. Edward, Lord Hawke, English admiral, defeated the French off Quiberon (1759). Jeffrey, Lord Amherst, was Wolfe's commander-in-chief when he took Quebec (1759), and suppressed the Gordon Riots in 1780.

L. 141. French critic. Criticism, as a separate form of literary art, grew up in France during the last half of the seventeenth century with Racine, Corneille, Molière. Till nearly the end of the eighteenth century literature was judged by French canons. A critic much in favour at this time was Diderot.

L. 171. all my eye. This phrase has returned to us, via America, as slang for "nonsense."

L. 178. *habus corpus*. The right of Habeas Corpus, that one could not be kept indefinitely in prison without a trial, was laid down in Magna Carta. Disregarded by Charles I, it was confirmed in the Petition of Right (1628) and guarded with strict penalties by the Act of 1679.

L. 184. nabbed. Skeat suggests that this slang word for "caught" was introduced by sailors, from Scandinavia.

L. 194. by the elevens. This exclamation, which is used by men of much the same class in *She Stoops to Conquer*, probably refers to the eleven apostles.

L. 217. before and behind. So as to give Honeywood no chance to escape.

L. 242. before I enlarged him. Before I set him at liberty.

L. 346. **toast-master.** The man whose duty it is to propose the healths at dinners. The first of Goldsmith's *Essays* gives an account of clubs, hardly the most fashionable of the day.

L. 393. **Pensacola business.** We had a station at Pensacola, on the west coast of Florida, and it came into prominence during the Seven Years' War (1756-63).

ACT IV.

L. 33. **rent-roll.** Income.

L. 56. **cavalierly.** Arrogantly, or more literally, in an off-hand manner.

L. 112. **fondling.** Cherished. Used by Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis* to mean "darling."

L. 137. **miff.** A quarrel, a "tiff."

L. 153. **a rush.** Cp. the current expression, "not worth a straw."

L. 200. **Soft and fair.** Don't be in such a hurry.

L. 219. **shaved.** Cheated or fleeced, to which the word obviously bears some relation.

L. 230. **Bedlam** was the familiar name for the hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem for lunatics, in St. George's Fields.

L. 232. **all in the horrors.** In a frenzy.

L. 242. **genuine incendiary spelling.** Spelt incorrectly, as if written by those who write threatening to burn down a house.

L. 245. **gunnes.** Guineas.

L. 246. **experation.** Expedition.

L. 254. **if this takes wind.** Mrs. Garnet meant, that if this is found out, there will be a great uproar: Croaker, convinced it is an incendiary letter, supposes it to mean that if the house once catches fire, it will be burnt. Shuter's reading of this letter is said to have decided the success of the play.

L. 292. **let the engine be drawn out.** Some of the modern fire insurance companies were in existence, and they had fire brigades. But as they were only allowed to attend those houses insured with themselves, most people kept their own hand-pumps.

L. 385. **economist.** Manager.

L. 402. **the house of Loretto.** At Loretto there is a small house said to have been the cottage of the Virgin Mary. It is supposed

to have travelled from Palestine to Italy miraculously, and a shrine has been built over it. See Swift's *Tale of a Tub* (1704), Section IV.

L. 428. it would not become me. Notice how Honeywood all along desires to agree with everybody.

L. 495. as many necks as a hydra. The hydra was a monster of mythology, and its slaying was the second of Hercules' twelve labours. Whenever one of its heads was cut off two others grew. But Hercules overcame it by burning the root of each head after crushing it.

ACT V.

LS. 22, 23. the Lamb . . . the Dolphin . . . the Angel. The public rooms of inns were sometimes (and at the Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford, still are) distinguished by such names, taken from emblems over the door. Miss Hardcastle quotes these exclamations in *She Stoops to Conquer* (Act III.), and much of the landlady's speeches is to be found in the essay on Scottish Marriages. Goldsmith wrote a great deal, often hurriedly, and was often content to believe in the Chinese proverb that once tried is good, but a hundred times tried is better.

L. 226. she's going. She is fainting.

L. 355. Paoli of Corsica. Southey, in his *Life of Nelson*, gives a full account of this Corsican patriot (1726-1807), who came to England in 1769.

L. 356. the Marquis of Squilachi was an Italian, minister of finance and war at Madrid. He was very unpopular and the cause of the riots which the King ascribed to Jesuits, whose suppression in Spain followed.

L. 357. Count Poniatowski. Stanislas Poniatowski (1732-1798) was nominated King of Poland by Catherine of Russia, 7th September, 1764.

L. 387. behind the curtain. Out of sight, private.

L. 402. the St. James's. *The St. James's Chronicle*, a paper whose title (see note on St. James's) shows that its praise meant something.

Wildman's was a coffee-house under the Piazza in Covent Garden.

L. 403. Merchant Tailors' Hall. The merchant tailors, whose hall was in Threadneedle Street, were the largest of the City companies.

L. 404. *my head in the print-shops.* Caricatures of well-known men about town were on sale in the print-shops, especially in the Strand.

L. 419. *ensigns of the Bath.* This order, which takes its name from the custom, formerly observed, of bathing at the installation, was founded in 1399, and remodelled in 1725 and 1815. It has three grades, Grand Cross, Knight Commander, and Companion, and is awarded for services within the United Kingdom. There is a technical account in Cussan's *History of Heraldry*, pp. 247-249.

EPILOGUE.

"The author, in expectation of an Epilogue from a friend at Oxford, deferred writing one himself till the very last hour. What is here offered owes all its success to the graceful manner of the actress who spoke it" (Goldsmith's note).

L. 18. *Warwick-lane.* A quarrel was pending between the Fellows and the Licentiates of the College of Physicians in Warwick Lane, over the exclusion of some of the Licentiates from Fellowship. In 1825, the house in Warwick Lane was given up, and the college removed to Pall Mall, east.

L. 19. *Your manager.* George Colman, the elder.

L. 32. "*To 'bide the pelting.*" This is line 29 of Scene 4, Act III, *King Lear*.

DATES IN GOLDSMITH'S LIFE

1728. Born at Pallas, County Longford, Ireland.
1744. Went to Trinity College, Dublin.
1752. Went to Edinburgh, to study medicine.
1754-6. Travelled about Europe.
1759. *Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*.
1764. *The Traveller*.
1766. *The Vicar of Wakefield* published (written 1761).
1768. *The Good-Natured Man*.
1770. *The Deserted Village*.
1773. *She Stoops to Conquer*.
1774. Died.

QUESTIONS

1. Contrast the three principal male characters in the play.
2. Put Joseph Surface in Honeywood's place and describe the results.
3. Write short notes on : Jesuits, a trip to Scotland, is he of the house ?, French critic, she has struck the blow up to the hilt, before and behind, if this takes wind.
4. In what respects might the play be better constructed ?
5. " We men of business despise the moderns, and as for the ancients, we have no time to read them." Is this borne out by the writings of Goldsmith himself ?
6. Quote any six remarks you can think of that apply to Goldsmith in this play.
7. By what means does Lofty impress others with a sense of the importance ?

SUBJECTS FOR SHORT ESSAYS

1. Why is this play so important to us ?
2. How much of himself, both consciously and unintentionally, do you think Goldsmith put into his chief character ?
3. "To say truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come by that which is past, the prospect is hideous."
4. "In our bad world respect is given where respect is claimed." Discuss Honeywood's and Lofty's characters in the light of this.
5. Write a short essay on sentimental comedy.
6. "I find I want constitution and a strong steady disposition, which alone makes men great. I will, however, correct my faults since I am conscious of them." Goldsmith wrote this in 1758, when he was thirty; he died when he was forty-six. How far may it be said that the first sentence is true, and how far did he fulfil the promise in the second ?
7. "We see more of the world by travel and more of human nature by remaining at home" (*Polite Learning*, Chapter XII).

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

1. Percy's *Memoir of Goldsmith*, published in 1801, was "the first considerable authentic biography," and has remained "the basis for a large part of the more ambitious biographies which have superseded it." Among these may be mentioned the *Lives* by John Forster and Austin Dobson. The Everyman edition of the plays contains a twenty-page Introduction by Austin Dobson, useful to those who have not time or means to consult the *Lives* at length, and the volume by W. Black in the English Men of Letters series should be used. Mr. John Bailey's *Dr. Johnson and His Circle* ("Home University Library") touches on Goldsmith at several points, and gives an account of his friends.

2. For eighteenth-century life, the most detailed works are Sir Walter Besant's *Survey of London*, volume 5, and H. D. Traill's *Social England*. But Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Horace Walpole's *Letters* (both of which are obtainable in the Everyman editions) and Fanny Burney's *Diary* have the entertainment as well as the authority of contemporary participation. There are some chapters on Fashion and Gossip (with amusing illustrations from magazines, etc.) of the time in *English Women in Life and Letters* by M. Phillips and W. S. Tomkinson. This is light reading, but it makes clear the allusions to dress, dicing and dancing in which plays of this period abound, and may well serve as an introduction to the more serious volumes.

3. Goldsmith has himself written on the eighteenth-century theatre in Letter 79 of *The Citizen of the World*, and there is an essay on "Sentimental Comedy" among his works. Professor Saintsbury's chapter on "Eighteenth-Century Drama" in *A Short History of English Literature* should certainly be studied, and Ashley Dukes's *Drama*, in the "Home University Library," is concise and clear, besides containing a list of books on the theatre. These can be supplemented by :

Shakespeare to Sheridan. By A. Thaler. Oxford University Press.

Sheridan to Robertson. By E. B. Watson. Harvard University Press.

Later Eighteenth-Century Drama (1750-1800). By Allardyce Nicoll. Cambridge University Press.

Professor Nicoll has also written a book, published by Harrap, on *The Development of the Theatre*. The eighteenth-century section has many illustrations of the theatres and settings of the time, and is particularly valuable for its information on stage-practice.

